





**By the Same Author**

*(Forth-coming books)*

Religious Movements in India

Philosophy of Freedom

*Bharatada Rajaniti* ( in Kannada )

*Bharatada Arthika Sthiti* ..

*Tattvajnana mattu Sahitya* ..

*Jagadguru Murusavirmath Publication No. 12*

THE  
**Lingayat Movement**  
*A Social Revolution in Karnatak*

*by*  
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*With Foreword by*  
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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

It is a matter of deep regret that there are very few books in English on Lingayat religion. Eminent philosophers like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan have not taken note of this mighty religious upheaval—the Lingayat movement—of the twelfth century. Indeed it is regrettable that Dr. S. Radhakrishnan should write only a sentence or two on Basava in his voluminous writings. He has discussed all the systems of Indian philosophy including Buddhism and Jainism. Of course there were many authoritative Sanskrit works on Lingayat religion—*Siddhanta-Sikhamani*, *Virashaivananda Chandrika*, *Lingadharana Chandrika* etc. He ought to have written a chapter on Lingayatism by referring to these Sanskrit works. In his later writings also he has not mentioned a word on the Lingayat religion.

But be as it may, the bulk of Lingayat literature is in Kannada the regional language of Karnatak. So there was a need for an authoritative work on Lingayat religion based on Kannada Vachana Shastra. I hope that the present book will serve that need. I have applied the scientific method to the study of the Lingayat movement—a new approach to history. All the aspects of Lingayatism are discussed and Lingayatism is compared with important religions of India and world.

In this connection I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sense of thankfulness to those who helped me in a number of ways. Mr. M. N. Roy, the world revolutionary, examined the manuscript ideologi-



cally, and an Englishman Mr. Philip Spratt, a leading journalist of Bangalore, scrutinized it and entered corrections. I am grateful to both of them. I specially thank Mr. M. N. Roy for having encouraged me to write the book. I am thankful to Dr. C. Ramalinga Reddy, Vice Chancellor, Andhra University, for his kindness in acceding to my request for a *Foreword* to my book.

My thanks are also due to Prof. S. S. Basavanal, M. A. for his valuable suggestions and timely encouragement to me, to Shreemant Basavaraja Desai, President Karnatak Seva Mantap and Vice-President, Karnatak Mahamandala, to Mr. G. S. Hurali, the Municipal Councillor, Dharwar, and his merchant friends; to Mr. Lingaraj Muddannavar of Byadagi and Mr. V. K. Javali M. Ed, for having helped the publication. I also express my heartfelt thanks to His Holiness Jagadguru Karibasava Swami Gavimath Samsthan, Uravakond, for his encouragement to me. But I am very grateful to Shree A. G. Kadadevaramath Swamiji Gokak, for his guidance in the matter.

Finally I owe a debt of gratitude to His Holiness Jagadguru Gurusiddha Rajayogindra Swamiji Murusavirmath, Hubli, for his financial support towards the printing of the book, which is respectfully dedicated to the late His Holiness Jagadguru Gangadhara Swamiji Murusavirmath. It is in the fitness of things to mention that His Holiness Jagadguru Gurusiddha Rajayogindra Swamiji offered a donation of one Lakh of rupees towards the establishment of the Commerce College Hubli,

under the management of the Karnatak Lingayat Education Society in which the author of the book is working at present.

I am also thankful to Mr. T. D. Shivalingayya, Proprietor, Karnataka Sahitya Mandira Dharwar, for having published my book; to Mr. Fakirappa Yallappa Mindagudli for having got it printed in his Ravindra Press and to Mr. S. S. Kulkarni, a prominent publisher of Dharwar, for the timely help.

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•

Talk not to me of those Puranas,  
They all preach Karma!  
Ancient Purana resorts to demon slaughter,  
Vedic Purana exhorts animal sacrifice;  
Demon-fight is the stamp of Ramayana;  
Family-feud is the core of Mahabharata,  
But peerless is Thy Purana, Lord Kudilasangama,  
...Lord Basava.

•

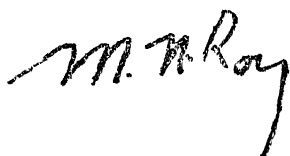
## EDITOR'S NOTE

The learned author of this book has for some time been urging me to write a history of the Lingayat movement. It would be a very interesting study, and my temptation to do it has also been great. But for various other preoccupations, I could not find as yet the necessary time. Mr. Hunashal, however, was impatient; he very rightly felt that a treatise on the social and cultural significance of the Lingayat movement should be published without any further delay. Unable to undertake the work in the near future, I encouraged him to write the present book, which gives a general idea of the subject, treating its various aspects in an unprecedented manner. *I am sure the result of Mr. Hunashal's painstaking study will draw the attention of historians to the period of Indian Reformation which still remains almost a closed chapter of our history.*

The publication of this highly interesting treatise on a particular historical phenomenon coincides with other, more elaborate efforts for rewriting Indian history. The history of India remains in a fragmentary state. The field of historical research is vast. Eminent scholars and distinguished public men are applying their talents to the task. Compared to their vast schemes, and unlimited resources this book is a modest effort. *But it has the great merit of applying the scientific method to the study of*

*history. Therefore, it is to be appreciated as a valuable, indeed hitherto unique, contribution to Indian historical research.*

Dehradun,  
July 15th, 1946.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "M. N. Roy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "M." and the last name "Roy" clearly legible, and "N." in the middle.

## FOREWORD

Basava is one of the greatest reformers that India has produced, a resolute and independent thinker, and also a man of resolute and independent conduct—a rare instance of powerful will combined with powerful intellect. He met many problems of his time with remarkable success, and the general principles of his life and philosophy he enunciated stand good for all time with the necessary modifications which each generation has to think out for itself and incorporate.

Life is a process of change, whether for better or for worse; and none can lay down the law for all eternity.

Great men like Basava light the lamp which we must keep blazing by feeding it properly with ample fuel from time to time.

The country is passing through critical times—I had almost said tragic. The joy and hope with which the new era started are already obscured and the sky is overcast.

*Mr. Hunashal has done a great service to our country by recalling to us the determined manner in which the great Basava fought against immeasurable odds and amidst difficulties which would have baffled any other man.*

Basava has a message for all times, and therefore for this age also, which the talented author of this book has sought to bring out according to the best of his knowledge and judgment.

Unanimity of opinion is not possible on current topics of controversy. But the fair-minded and quick-witted citizens would like to view a problem in all its aspects and welcome the thoughts presented by different schools of politics and of philosophy, and take them into account before forming their judgments. That is the value of Mr. Hunashal's application of Basava's principles to the solution of current questions.

*Mr. Hunashal's book is an inspiring contribution to a proper understanding of Basava and his great mission.*

Waltair,  
20-10-1947.



*Vice-Chancellor,*  
Andhra University.

## P R E F A C E

Any nation, race or community has some philosophy or other. Philosophy is the basis of life. Indeed it is at best criticism of life. Philosophy may be religious, agnostic, or scientific. The Indian hoary past was saturated with religious philosophy. Philosophy was wedded to religion. Hence religious philosophy was a lever of progress. A change in the fundamentals of philosophy results in striking changes in life and society. Re-orientation of religion leads to reformation. Philosophy religious or scientific may be regressive or progressive. It depends upon the trend of times. Since philosophy in India was mainly religious, social progress and prosperity were possible through a progressive religion only. Religions in the past were polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic and agnostic.

If there be any religion that brought about social revolution in India after the fall of Buddhism, it is the Lingayat Religion. Buddhism fought and defeated Hinduism. Hinduism was philosophically reactionary; hence it was socially regressive. Buddhism fought Hinduism on the agnostic front; whereas Lingayatism did through monotheism.

Sociologically Hinduism was vitiated by *Varnashrama-Dharma*. That caste sytem was responsible for socia; slavery, economic depression and political dominationl so that even now India is undergoing terrible and tragic consequences of her age-long caste system which is other-



wise termed communalism. Among the various movements, Lokayatika, Buddhistic, Jain, Vaishnava etc that revolted against the Hindu caste system, the Lingayat Movement stands out prominent, ranks fourth chronologically; and ideologically it is monotheistic.

The apologists of caste fall into two groups; Brahmin Philosophers like Sir S. Radhakrishnan justify the Hindu four-fold caste system on the ground that "It illustrates the spirit of comprehensive synthesis characteristic of the Hindu mind with its faith in the collaboration of races and the co-operation of cultures"\*

The second group is represented by Mr. K. T. Paul. He holds: ".....The Hindu social system has been through the centuries the most potent in holding every individual to his social obligations, religious duties as also to his economic and civic responsibilities. To it is due the perfection in craftsmanship brought about by a process of apprenticeship from father to son through perhaps two hundred generations. To it is also due the steady pursuit of knowledge and culture through these classes who were, so to say, told off to devote themselves exclusively to it as students and teachers. But India owes all that is her distinctive identity almost exclusively to the protection afforded by caste and by its unchallengeable potentiality for good."†

But Sir S. Radhakrishnan continues: "Though it has now degenerated into an instrument of oppression and

\* Hindu View of Life. P. 93:- S. Radhakrishnan

† British Connection with India S. C. M., P. 37- K. T. Paul

intolerance and though it tends to perpetuate inequality and develop the spirit of exclusiveness, these unfortunate effects are not the cultural motives of the system." But history holds that in no period did the caste system bring about the philosopher's synthesis and harmony. The very genesis of the caste system breeds exclusiveness and leads to compartmentalisation. Mr. K. M. Panikkar examines the point in detail: "The question for examination therefore is, *at what stage in the history of caste, was it not an instrument of oppression and of intolerance.* Was it in Buddha's time, in the Mauryan Era, in the Gupta period or in any other of the known ages of Indian history or merely in an ideal age postulated by philosophers? In all the known periods of Indian history after the system of caste had come into existence, it has been an instrument of intolerance and oppression. In the time of King Rama of the Ramanayana we know that Brahmins complained against the austerities of a Sudra Sanyasi and Rama is praised for having killed him for heinous crime of being religious: In Buddha's time the intolerance of caste was such that the Thathagata raised his voice most strongly against it. The Artha-Shastra provides sufficient evidence of the system of caste being used as an instrument of oppression ..... The Hindu States which remained independent like the Vijayanagar Empire and the Maratha Confederacy became the champions of Hinduism on its defence. The *raison d'etre* of this existence was as sanctuary and refuge of orthodoxy. A society on the defence is inevitably more reacoinary, more anxious to preserve than to reform, to find apologists for all that

had been inherited good or bad. These States therefore considered their true function to be the conservation of the *Dharma*, the upholding of the customs and practices of the past:—Sir S. Radhakrishnan's attempt at justifying caste by declaring its present injustices as being due to degeneration and by appealing to an age when caste in its purity was an illustration of the comprehensive synthesis of which the Hindu mind was capable, is therefore both unhistorical and meaningless.... With much of what Mr. Paul says no one could agree. Undoubtedly the system of hereditary occupation which underlies the economic conception of caste led to perfection of craftsmanship. But at what price was the perfection of craftsmanship brought; by keeping the vast body of Hindus submerged in superstition and ignorance.....”\*

How many mute Miltons and village Hamdens has India lost in her history of Caste? How many geniuses and giants are cast away? As the poet Gray in his *Elegy* remarks:

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did never unroll;  
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Basava, like Buddha and Mahavir, saw the appalling ignorance and superstition of lower caste people and traced the root cause of it to the Varnashramadharma.

---

\* *Hinduism and the Modern World*: K. M. Panikkar

The credit of having brought about a social revolution through religion backed up with a progressive philosophy goes to Basava, the leader of Lingayat Movement. Basava found the cause of social and economic slavery of the masses in the Brahmanic caste system. Hence he revolted against the Hindu philosophy and its caste system. In the light of monotheism he distinguished between religion and communalism. All men and women irrespective of their caste, creed or colour had an access to Divinity. The social economy and ethics were reorientated to the Lingayat Monotheism. Basava emphasized the one-ness of the Almighty Power and the importance of ethics; while exposing the hollow nature of the so-called caste system, Basava observes:

One who kills an animal is low-born;  
There is nothing like caste or creed.  
Sharanas only are high-born,  
For they wish good to all animal creation,  
Lord Kudalasangama.

Mr. P. G. Halakatti B. A., LL. B., a research Kannada Scholar and editor of the Lingayat research Journal '*Shivanubhava*' (in Kannada) gives a pen-picture of Basava and his Lingayat Movement:

"In the century that Basava rose to eminence, we find that there was a great religious, social and literary upheaval in Karnatak. Then the great King Vikramaditya of the Chalukyas and another equally powerful King Vishnuvardhan of the Hoysalas ruled in the Northern and Southern portions of the country

respectively. The great philosopher and teacher Ramanuja who fled from the capital of the Chola King found an asylum in the Court of Vishnuvardhan and founded his Shri-Vaishnavism in that part of the country which is now the Mysore Province. But in the North, it was the liberal Lingayat religion that attracted the minds of the masses and spread rapidly in the country. It enjoined the worship of the only one God viz., "The Infinite God Power" without form and all pervading, emphasized the importance of good conduct, recognised no caste distinctions, viewed woman as equal to man in social status and position, maintained that unity with the Infinite-God-Power was the goal of every human being and propounded the 'Shatsthala' system which recognizes the evolution of man in six successive stages. This movement led to a great out-burst of literature, both prose and poetry and the Vachanas form an important part of this literature.

"The Vachanas are short pithy sayings and display deep thought and meaning. They appeal to the mind very powerfully and are very impressive, being deeply spiritual. In fact they form a unique kind of literature in Kannada in as much as the like of them are not found in any other Indian literature.

"The sayings are very pure in thought and inculcate absolute morality and good behaviour in the devotee. The sayings indicate that the Lingayats are no haters of the world, nor of the daily avocations which one has to pursue to earn one's daily bread, but enjoins right be-

haviour in all the vicissitudes of life, which ultimately results in the full unfoldment of what is best and noble in man" Basava says:

Forbid me in thy name, Oh Kudalasangama,  
And in the name of thy Sharanas,  
If I thy devotee's caste desire to know  
When he comes to my dwelling.  
From Brahmin down to the lo-wborn all are equal.  
If they be all thy devotees, Lord Kudalasangama.

Lingayat Vachanas are the current coin of the Kannada literature. They are on the lips of a literate citizen and an illiterate villager in Karnatak. They are often tuned to music and sung in the literary Conferences. They appeal to the learned because of their profundity of thought; and they impress upon the layman because of their simplicity of expression; so that they have become the common stock of knowledge possessed by the learned and the layman.

The key-note of the popularity of the Vachanas can be traced to the fact that great thoughts and ideas about Lingayat religion, philosophy, economics etc, are expressed lucidly in the simple language of ordinary people. The tenets of Lingayatism are convincingly conveyed in the tongue of a villager. Secondly, since brevity is the soul of wit, Vachanakaras formulate definitions of religion, economics etc. in a brief formula.

Since Vachanas embody the pressing problems, social, religious and economic, their educative value cannot be denied. The present fad about sex equality

and female education was well tackled and put into effect by the Vachanakaras in the twelfth century. The thought-provoking dialogue between Allama Prabhu and Akka Mahadevi at Kalyan in the Anubhava Mantapa, reminds us of one between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi and of another between Lord Buddha and Maha-Pajapati the Gotamid. In the conference the young maiden answered all questions and queries put by the President Allama Prabhu. But before Akka Mahadvi came to Anubhava Mantap there were scores of woman writers who took part in the daily deliberations of the conference. Here is an interesting dialogue between Allama Prabhu and Akka Mahadevi.

**Allama Prabhu:** Wherefore didst thou come hither Madam? Tell us who thy lord is. Otherwise our Sharanas fordid thee:

**Akka-Mahadevi:** God Channamallikarjuna himself is my Lord. I am not at all related to other lords of this world:

Listen, o mother,

I love him.

He is the One, the only One;

He knows no birth, no death;

He's uncabinned by caste or clime;

He's boundless, changeless, formless;

He's beautiful beyond compare.

All others fade away

And die at last.

I'll have none of them.

My Lord fore'er shall be

The One Channamallikarjuna !

**AllamaPrabhu:**—Thy profuse hair has hidden the private part of thy naked body as a garment. But thereby a woman's modesty is not kept up. God Guheshvara regards this garment as improper.

**AkkaMahadevi:**—Of what use is it if our body turns dull and dark? And if it should appear bright and blithe it is of little use either. When our heart is rendered pure, then the complexion of our body which is made blissful by God Mallikarjuna, is of no account.

**AllamaPrabhu:**—If thy heart is pure, why dost thou hide thy body with the hair? That may be due to inward bashfulness which expresses itself outwardly. This our God Guheshvara does not like.

**Akka Mahadevi:**—I hide that thou be not enticed

But the dialogue between Lord Buddha and a woman saint Maha Pajapati ( through Ananda ) shows that Buddha at last consented to admit women to his order on specific conditions. When Maha Pajapati received a flat negative answer from Buddha, then she tried her luck through Ananda the disciple of Buddha. Thus spoke Lord:

Enough, Ananda! Long not that women be permitted so to do!

**Ananda:**—Lord, are women capable, after going forth from the home into the homeless life under the monastic discipline set forth by the Tathagata—are they capable of realizing the fruit of Stream-winning, of Once-returning, of Never-returning, of Arhantship?

**Buddha:**— Women are capable.....of doing so Ananda.



**Ananda:**—Then Lord, if women are capable of so doing then Maha Pajapati, the Gotamid, was of great service to the Exalted One ...

**Buddha:**—Well, then, Ananda, if Maha Pajapati Gotamid, will undertake to keep Eight Rules, let that be reckoned unto her as full ordination.

The comparative account makes it quite clear that the Lingayat Movement was more freedom-centred than Buddhism. Basava admitted women into his fold without putting any conditions or rules. Free thought was the core of the Lingayat Movement.

Dr. Ramanan Shastri remarks, "I may safely say that there are few faiths that have flourished on the Indian soil, which have so openly preached the equality of man, of the prince and the peasant, of sages and sinners, in the social scale. The Veerashaivas did away with the lip-religion of polished commonplaces and of mere moral and spiritual shibboleths, and actually lived the principles that they taught"\*

"The traditional Lingayat Teacher, Basava, proclaimed:

(1) All men are born equal .....

(2) Combined with the assertion of the essential equality of all men constituted the vital departure from the doctrines of orthodox Hinduism, the removal of all chief Hindu rites and of the ceremonial impurity"†

---

\* Siddhanta Dipika, Vol. XI

† Enthoven in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

Indians are generally Maya-minded. They think after the fashion of Shankar, that the world is unreal. By so doing they have become visionaries and Hamlets. But the Vachana version of the Lingayat philosophy explodes the myth of Maya and contends that the world is real and life is really worth to be lived. The universe is indestructible though it may change its form. It is the garment of the Divine, an essential part of the Providence. Hence the Lingayat Sharanas strike the golden mean and render a compromise between the practical and the providential, the *Vyavaharika* and the *Paramarthika*. That is the position of Lingayatism in Indian philosophy.





### LORD BASAVA

Basava: Thine was a brave heart !  
Indefatigable was thy undaunted spirit:  
Thy soul was a star to a wandering bark,  
Whilst the ocean was stormy !

Old dogmas and doctrines degenerate,  
Their potentialities rendered void;  
New ones skim on the ken then  
Pregnant with progressive trends !

The country was in stagnant waters,  
Great religions Buddhism and Jainism,  
Had decayed and degenerated at last  
Demoralizing the land of Buddha.

Then arose thy enlightened movement  
More revolutionary than Buddhism:  
The uplift of the oppressed as its ideal  
Breaking the bonds of Brahmanism.

Torn and tormented was India then  
Under the yoke of *Varnashramadharma* !  
Thy inspiring message came as a balm  
Cutting the shackles of age-long caste.

Equality, liberty, fraternity of humanity:  
The watchwords of thy movement  
Stirred the dormant spirit of Indians  
To combat the conservative order.

Hail to thee! Blithe and bonny spirit !  
Thy message winged Kashmir to Comorin  
Brought glory and victory to Kalyan  
Amidst odds so immeasurable !

# LORD BASAVA

*Leader of Lingayat Movement*



Regard ye Shastra as great ?  
It preaches karma. '  
Think ye Veda superior ?  
It teaches animal slaughter.  
Hold ye Smriti supreme ?  
It is blind and can't find Thee.  
All these thou transcend'st,  
For social service is Thy stamp, Kudalsangama.  
—Lord Basava



## INTRODUCTION

### PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND SCIENCE

"It blesseth him that gives and him that takes." Thus Portia glorifies mercy in 'Merchant of Venice.' Philosophy like mercy blessed in the past both religion and science. Philosophy was not a bitter antagonist of science and religion but a better protagonist and propagandist of science and religion. In the spirit of science and with a like theoretical detachment philosophy has attempted in the past to carry the torch of knowledge beyond the bounds of science. Philosophy deals with special problems that lie outside the range of positive sciences, problems such as, consciousness, space, truth, causality etc. In short, philosophy furthers, perpetuates, facilitates and perfects the work of a scientist in a laboratory. Hence, it is effectively expressed by a reputed philosopher, Weber, that philosophy is at once a summary of sciences and their completion. Therefore a modern Positivist Comte concludes that philosophy must carry the scientific knowledge to its logical conclusion and he labels his system as Positivism. According to his version, philosophy must be technical and theoretical in motive.

But philosophy had another demand in the past. It had to furnish a hungering soul with a right estimate of Reality or God for achieving salvation, freedom from the mundane existence. To express differently, philosophy must be humane and keenly alive to the deeper needs and passions of man. Philosophy has attempted in the past

to formulate a religious belief elaborating a plan of salvation. Philosophy was thus at once a recondite investigation and a popular oracle, dispensing logical subtleties to the learned and homely wisdom to the vulgar. And in consequence, at present, philosophers divide among themselves and speak a mixed language.

It is clear that philosophy has served these two masters, science and religion, from the beginning. The dilemma of philosophy arises only if we identify science with theory and religion with belief. Of course, it is quite true that science is a conspicuous example of theory and religion, a unique example of belief. Science is interested in proximate causes and religion in final causes. Science has to do with the immediate causes and religion with ultimate causes. Science is a description of facts, religion is an enunciation of convictions and beliefs. This logic appears to view science and religion as antagonists and extremes. But such an antagonistic relation between science and religion is arbitrary and absurd. For theoretical science is eventually assimilated to life. Science, though disinterested in its motive, serves humanity as well. That is, there is a belief about proximate causes. Similarly there is a dispassionate theoretical study of ultimate causes. In other words, as popular science is related to pure science, so is religion related to philosophy. In fine, philosophy is a great benefactor supplying the sciences with the co-ordination and application and religion with a scientific grounding. To express differently, sciences seek their unity, harmony, yea, their salvation in philosophy and religion finds its

surety and stability in philosophy. Therefore, sciences without philosophy are blind i. e., we cannot understand the constituents of different classes of things without knowing the relation between them. Philosophy traces the relation between different classes of things. And religion without philosophy is a random guess-work.

But the present ambiguous position of philosophy is due to the modern opposition of science and religion, and to the habit of linking theory with science and belief with religion. But this conflict between science and religion is unnecessary and philosophy must mediate between them. Historically we find that the conflict between science and religion did not appear until about the time of Kant and philosophers also did not divide among themselves between scientists and religious minded men.

But in ancient times the disjunction between science and religion was prevented by the method of Teleology. To understand a thing was to see the good of it. Therefore, the method of religion i. e., the interpretation of nature for life was also the method of science. The basal science was not physics which abstracted from life but ethics which rationalized life. Thus ethics was considered to be the model of sciences. Therefore, science and religion sought shelter under the banner of ethics. Consequently there was no dilemma of philosophy. Philosophy was at once an extension of science and refinement of religion. In the mediaeval times too the conflict between science and religion did not appear.



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For the mediaeval thought was anthropocentric. Teleology and ethics were substituted for holiness and theology. Everything was a handmaid to theology. Hence, no radical difference between science and religion arose. Philosophy was not compelled to take sides.

But during the Renaissance period due to the rapid growth of science the categories of science were extended to religion. Philosophy derived its impetus from the new scientific movement. The Cartesian movement headed by Descartes adopted a mathematical method and applied it to the metaphysic of God and Soul. In mathematics Descartes found the clearness and distinctness in which the ancient philosophy was totally lacking. The equation  $2+2=4$ , is quite clear and distinct. Therefore, God exists. This attempt culminated in the system of Spinoza with its mathematical terminology, its deductive order, the rigorous suppression of anthropomorphism and its conversion of God into the ultimate necessity. The Baconian movement revived and accentuated by the English philosopher, John Locke, applied the historical method and inferred God from Nature. God was a simple inference from effect to a cause, from Nature to its creator and from the contrivances of Nature to the intelligence of creator. Thus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mathematics and physics became the rallying point of a new army for the conquest of the unknown. But there was no dilemma for philosophy; because science and religion followed the same method. Philosophy too applied the method of science to the subject matter of religion.

But the bold attempt to extend physics to religion was heavily charged by David Hume in England at the close of the eighteenth century. He argued the utter ambiguity, incongruity, absurdity and impossibility of inferring God from Nature. For, we have no impressions of God. Such an attempt fails to satisfy the demands of religion. On the continent too, Kant, the great German philosopher, confirmed the criticism of Hume and added to it the destruction of the Cartesianism of the day. He utterly betrayed the absurdity and impossibility of proving the existence of God from the idea of God. For, can the idea of hundred dollars in my head fill my pocket with real jingling dollars? No! He pointed out that the method of empirical science and the method of exact science failed to justify religion. Hence, there resulted a new division of thought between the party of science and the party of religion. At the same time philosophy was confronted with a dilemma. It was called to take sides between scientists and religionists. But instead, it itself divided into two parties—those who followed science for the sake of its theoretical motive and those who pursued religion on account of its subject matter. These doctrines were first known as Positivism and Romanticism. Comte was the father of Positivism and Kant, a reviver of Romanticism. In the hands of Herbert Spencer the metaphysics of the former times was formally convicted, tried and banished to the realm of the 'unknowable'. On the other hand, Kant, having announced in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that the entire scientific world is necessarily categorised

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by the laws of understanding, proceeds to say that this is only the phenomenal world. The world of Noumenon or Reality is approached only through moral experience and faith. This is really taking sides with religion against science, condemning all scientific Reality as phenomenal and accepting all religious experience as absolutely real. Later, Positivism developed into Naturalism which was definitely materialistic. Idealism was substituted for Romanticism with a suitable theory of knowledge.

Here an important question arises: What is the difference between a scientist and a scientific philosopher. A scientist proper works in his field and is not bothered by philosophical problems. He is not troubled by the supposed paradoxes of space and time or by the nature of causality, the unity of the world and the meaning of truth. He moves in his special scientific sphere. A physicist does not question the origin of matter but presupposes it. Ultimate questions are outside the scope of sciences. A mathematician is restricted to the problems of number and quantity. He does not know of the non-quantitative Reality. But the scientist is also a man; hence he may become a scientific philosopher. In hours of unprofessionable meditation, his mind may turn to those ultimate problems. When he applies a scientific theory to the world at large, he becomes a philosopher. When he applies an evolutionary hypothesis to the constitution of the world, he becomes an evolutionary philosopher.

But what is the difference between a religionist and a religious philosopher? Both aim at achieving the ultimate Reality. And a poet also aims at it. But the poet's way is sensuous, that of a philosopher is intellectual and that of a religionist is intuitive. Philosophy differs from religion in its spirit and method. Philosophy deals with ultimate questions in a purely scientific spirit and its object is intellectual satisfaction. Its method is not intuitive but critical and systematic analysis of conceptions. It differs from mathematics in being non-quantitative and non-numerical in its method. It differs from sciences in that it does not increase knowledge but discusses the way in which facts are interpreted if we wish to think consistently.

“ Now, it is generally believed that religion is inherent in man. It is said that to believe is human nature. There again, close acquaintance with the history of humanity leads us to believe the contrary. It is not human nature to believe. Human nature is to enquire. The essence of human nature is to find the causes of things. Man, by nature, is rationalist, and philosophy was born by the questionings of the primitive man. Faith stepped in only when the primitive man failed in his effort to give an explanation of the Universe in terms of tangible quantities, in physical terms. But we cannot leave a thing without explanation. When we cannot explain a thing, not knowing its cause, we must assume suppositions. The philosophy known as Marxism is the logical outcome of the scientific mode of thought.

The essence of thought is not to accept anything for granted. If your enquiry requires hypothesis, it should not be granted any more value than of hypothesis. For a scientist, a hypothesis has to be established through empirical investigations. The scientific thought introduced in our modern time by the founders of classical modern philosophy, dissolved the religious mode of thought which had dominated European thought during the preceding 1000 or 1200 years. But rationalist philosophy, which could give a complete explanation of the Universe is naturally dependent on the advance of science. Consequently, the efforts of the founders of modern philosophy to construct a closed system of thought compelled them to fall back on metaphysical assumptions, when science did not supply them with the clue for the solution of a problem. Modern philosophy was caught in that vicious circle until Karl Marx. The vicious circle was that it started with the repudiation of all previous metaphysical assumptions, but had to set up new metaphysical assumptions. I can only remind you of Kant. His philosophy has gone down in history as the all shattering philosophy. He destroyed all the old, and built up a new system of metaphysics. This was not entirely due to the backwardness of natural sciences. There was another reason, namely certain errors in epistemology, in the theory of cognition. In their anxiety to dispense with everything that could appear as immaterial, the founders of modern Materialism under-estimated the

role of the mind. There were fantastic doctrines which regarded mind as a secretion of the brain, or similar doctrines. If you go to that extent, then you are confronted with the fundamental problem in epistemology, namely how is knowledge possible? This question baffled all, and in the absence of a scientific explanation, these fantastic doctrines were set up. Marx could brush away the cobwebs of this baffling question. On that point, the fundamental Principle of Marx is that ideas are also realities. You know the old controversy regarding the ultimate reality of either idea or matter. Now, the earlier materialists disputed the reality of ideas, of the mind. By reality is understood objective reality. Marx was the first materialist to recognise the objective reality of ideas. He said that once ideas are formed, once the process of ideation has taken place in human mind, ideas are as real as any other physical object. That gives a new complexion to the whole controversy. Ideas are matter. Ideas and their object are no longer antithetical terms, but it becomes a question of priority. Which precedes what? Did idea precede the physical world? Or did matter precede idea? Marx did not try to give a speculative answer to that question. He went in for an exhaustive examination of the development of human ideas. In that attempt he was not the pioneer. The pioneer work was done by Hegel, the ideological preceptor of Karl Marx. Hegel, for the first time had written a coherent history of philoso-

phy and came to the conclusion that the history of mankind is the history of philosophy. He said that ideas existed and the material world is the relation of ideas. Now Marx raised the question: How do ideas come into existence? In the olden days, when human mind was accustomed to religious thought, this question could appear as irrelevant. But in the age of scientific thought it is perfectly relevant and had to be answered. If it is true that the history of mankind is the history of philosophy, the clue to the history of mankind that is the governing law of social evolution, will be found in the origin of idea. Once an idea is formed human behaviour and development is dominated by this idea. But how are these ideas formed? Once we can find that we will be able to find the fundamental law of social development.

“By investigating the origin of society, and aided by the material collected by other sciences, for example anthropology, archeology and others, Marx could establish that the mode of thinking of human beings is determined by the mode by which he earns his livelihood. That reduces all problems to a very simple substratum. Marxian philosophy may not be entirely accepted by all the philosophers to-day. But no philosopher who is worthy of the name, much less any scientist, would dispute that our mode of thought, our behaviours, our beliefs, are determined by the environments in which we live. This is no longer a matter of theory or speculation, but a

matter of fact, and these are not mere historical facts which we have to discover by research in antiquity. But we find them before our own eyes if we study the mode of living of people in other parts of the world. We can see that different groups of people, living in different parts of the world, invariably develop different modes of production, have distinct ideas, distinct kinds of faiths and distinct social organisations. When Marx could make that discovery, the old problem of philosophy, that is the epistemological problem, how knowledge is possible, was solved. For the first time, we had an insight into history. We had a certain fundamental principle which could explain the entire human existence in its various departments. Therefore, Marxism is not limited only to philosophy, but it stretches out to all the other branches of human activity. But you must remember that there is Marxism, and again we say this is Marxist economics, or Marxist politics. That means, we approach these latter problems of economics and politics in the light of certain principles which are the principles of Marxian philosophy. We approach all the problems in this same light. The essence of Marxism is in those principles, which are the principles of Materialism. ....

“The object of philosophy is not to interpret the world, but to re-make the world. If we think that we can re-make the world as it is to-day, it logically follows that some other man before us has made the world as it is to-day. That conclusion frees



humanity from all spiritual bondage. It strikes at the root of the religious mode of thought, eliminates the necessity of faith. The classical idealistic philosophy has destroyed religion, but had ended in some sort of Fatalism. Pre-Marxian philosophy was essentially fatalistic. Man was a victim of his environments; he had no hand in shaping these environments, and yet all he does and thinks is determined by them. That means the whole world is only a vast prison house without an escape, ruled by a God who previously was considered to be spirit, and was now conceived of as matter. But in Marxian philosophy man assumes the function of the God. What Marx said was not propounded as a dogma. But in the light of scientific research he proved that man lives in certain environments, that his behaviour, his being and becoming is determined by these environments. But at the same time, man reacts on those environments and shapes them by his reactions. He is not an actor on the stage walking over it, detached and untouched, a prescribed route. But he is a part of the stage itself. His movements are determined by his environments in as much as these include his own being. Thus he has become not only the maker and master of his environments including his own self, but he has become the maker of history. That is the essence of Marxism . . . . .

“You know of the revolutionary discoveries of modern physics. They are so very revolutionary that a number of leading physicists have declared that

the foundation of Materialism has been knocked out, so that we have to revert to the method of metaphysical speculation and worship at the shrine of some mathematical God. If we would stick to the letters of Marxian materialism, we shall find that we are not in a position to meet the arguments put forth by these modern scientists, because certain scientific knowledge of his time has proved to be fallacious and new facts have been discovered. In the days of Marx, matter was conceived of as so many physical entities. Modern physics has destroyed that conception. So, if you would stick to the letter of Marx's conclusions, you may have the satisfaction of being the most orthodox of all Marxists, but you are not a Marxist according to Marx's own ideas. Because you can not then have a scientific explanation of the world any longer. To-day, a Marxist is required to question the fundamentals of materialism itself in order to keep pace with the discoveries of modern knowledge. ....

"If you study the history of Indian philosophy, you will find the analogous origin of materialist thought in our country. Between Democritos and Epicuros and Marx, there was a continuous line of development, tracing which Marx could only come to his conclusions. Similarly, there must be stages and phases in our philosophical history between our ancient philosophers and the most modern philosophy of Marxism. You will have to begin your study farther back. Great revolutions, philosophical,

intellectual, spiritual and political revolutions took place in Europe before the days of Karl Marx. And we, living in a more backward age than were the days of Karl Marx, shall have to learn from those revolutions. We shall have to understand the ideologies, the character and the social outcome of those revolutions that have still to be achieved in our country. Those modes of thought which were decisive for those revolutions, which gave a spiritual and moral sanction to those necessary radical transformations in Europe; we must have them there also, in order to bring about a situation in which eventually, Marxism will be appreciated as it is, when there will be a considerable section of the people prepared to practise Marxism. A Marxist in our country, to-day, must appear on the scene as the pioneer of those modes of thought, that is as the pioneer of a Renaissance movement in India. He must come forward as a champion of that philosophical revolution— of those transformations of society which preceded Marxism and which ushered in Marxism as a necessary form of human thought.”\*

That is the role that philosophy has to play in India. Hence Cesero winds up his opinion in his famous exclamation:

*Philosophy, thou director of our life,  
Thou friend of virtue and enemy to vice,  
What were we what were the life  
Of man at all but thee ?*

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\* What is Marxism; M. N. Roy

## CHAPTER I

### **RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY:**

#### THEIR RELATION TO SOCIAL SCIENCES

The social and political movement of a country has its basis in philosophy. Philosophy may be theological or scientific, religious or rationalistic. That depends upon the trend of the times. Social movements in ancient times were marked by religion. Religions were natural, polytheistic, monotheistic, pantheistic or agnostic. Socio-economic and political development was possible only through a religious ideology. But in modern times social and political upheavals are characterized by science and philosophy. The lightning progress of science has revolutionised knowledge. It has affected every part of our life. Hence philosophy has become scientific. It is styled as the science of sciences. Any history of philosophy hangs in the air, unless the social dynamics underlying it is laid bare. On the other hand to depict the dialectics of ancient thought would be merely a pleasant pastime if it did not serve the purpose of reconstructing the social history of antiquity.

“ Every revolution affects the entire scope of human activities. The revolutions of our time, inspired by science and materialist philosophy, affect the spiritual and moral aspects of human activity also. There was a time when religion and the so-called supernatural things were foremost in the

minds of people. They lived as we do; but they lived in an atmosphere in which predominance was given to religion, faith, belief, God and supernatural things. Consequently a revolution in that period was largely a religious movement— a movement to introduce a change in the beliefs, ideas, patterns of thought and institutions of religion. All the revolutions of the ancient time were all largely religious movements. As a matter of fact, the so-called world religions were all born of great revolutions. Buddhism was a revolution. Christianity rose as a revolution. And so did Islam. In China, the religion which was overwhelmed later on by Confucianism, namely, Taoism, was also a revolutionary movement. The motive force of all those revolutions was revolt against the priesthood of the primitive natural religion. Hinduism is a natural religion.”\*

Another encyclopaedic thinker of our time, Herbert Spencer, traces the influence of religious thought or politics:

“ Every tradition represents rulers as gods or demi-gods. By their subjects, primitive kings were regarded as superhuman in origin and superhuman in power. They possessed divine titles, received obeisances like those made before the altars of deities and were in some cases actually worshipped. Later in the progress of civilization, as during the middle ages in Europe, the current opinions respecting the

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\* Scientific Politics: M. N. Roy

relation between rulers and ruled are further changed. For the theory of divine origin there is substituted that of divine right. No longer god or demigod or even god descended, the king is now simply regarded as God's viceregent ... .. Moreover his authority ceases to be unlimited. Subjects deny his right to dispose at will their lives and properties and yield allegiance only in the shape of obedience to his commands.

"With advancing political opinion has come still greater restriction of monarchical power. Belief in the supernatural character of the ruler, long ago repudiated by ourselves for example, has left behind it nothing more than the popular tendency to ascribe unusual goodness, wisdom and beauty to the monarch ... .. By deposing some and putting others in their places, we have not only denied the divine right of certain men to rule, but we have denied that they have any rights beyond those originating in the assent of the nation ... .. We have entirely divested the monarch of legislative power and should immediately rebel against his or her dictation even in matters of small concern."†

Examining Indian history we find religious and philosophical movements led to the setting up of empires big and small. The empires of Ashoka and Harsha were an outcome of Buddhism. Buddhism was the state religion of Ashoka. The Chalukya kingdoms of the

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† First Principles: Herbert Spencer.

Karnatak and the Deccan rose in response to the revolutionary cult of Jainism. The Lingayat Kalyan state instituted in the *Anubhava Mantapa* was the result of the Lingayat Movement. The Vijayanagar Empire of Karnatak was set up under the guidance of a great theologian named Vidyaranya or Madhavacharya, the advocate of Sankar's *Advaitawada*. Its ideal background was Hinduism dominated by Brahmanism. The rise of the Marathas had a Brahmanic ideology. Sikhism symbolized the harmony between Hinduism and Islam.

Mr. M. N. Roy in his thought-provoking classic *Materialism* analyses the theological background of ancient Indian society:

“ No religion is born in a day — revealed to a particular prophet. The doctrines and dogmas of each religion crystallise themselves in a process over a whole period of history. It is a period of social transformation. The change in the conditions of material life brings about a corresponding adjustment of ideal standards, although these are considered to be precedent to, and independent of, the mundane world. The disruption of old social relations shakes the basis of a particular form of faith. Man's relation to God or gods, as the case may be, is determined by the relations among men themselves. Natural religion, as for example of the Vedas, or of the Greek mythology, is the deification of the diverse phenomena of nature as objects of worship. It is the religion of the decentralised tribal society. Monotheism, the belief in one God, rises as

the ideology of a centralised state. The worship of a glittering galaxy of gods, all equally powerful idealised human beings, is the spiritual expression of man living in the state of primitive democracy. The idea of one God or a super-god, becomes a social necessity as a spiritual sanction for the monarchic state rising on the ruins of tribal freedom. An over-lord in Heaven is postulated as the sanction for an over-lord on earth.

“The development of the religion of a particular group of human beings from polytheism to monotheism is influenced by the intensity of the social crisis under which it takes place and of the maturity of the forces of further progress. Either there is a complete break with the past and monotheistic faith gains ground as the mighty lever to revolutionise social relations; or the conception of a sort of super-God grows out of the background of polytheism, as a compromise between the old and the new. The latter development represents a continuation of the social crisis, the urge for progress being too weak and halting to clear away the decayed old.

“The spiritual progress of India followed the latter course. Vedantic monotheism—that of the Upanishads—did not replace the older form of faith. Instead, it rationalised primitive polytheism. The reason for such an involved process is to be found in the relation of social classes which constituted its background. The new monotheistic doctrine was not



sponsored by a new class with a spiritual outlook free from tradition. It did not appear as a standard-bearer of revolt against the established rites and rituals which fortified the dominating social position of the priestly class. The dissatisfaction with the old faith was voiced mostly by individual members of the priestly class and remained confined to them. Naturally their dissatisfaction could not and did not go to the extent of advocating complete abolition of a popular form of worship which had placed their class at the head of society. The monotheism preached by them was not a new popular faith. It was a mystic cult which largely remained a monopoly of the priesthood and consequently reinforced their social position. The new cult did not condemn the old faith; on the contrary, it recommended it as the religion suitable for the vulgar. An airy structure of mystic monotheism was thus reared upon the foundation of decayed natural religion. The new faith was not the result of a striving to free the individual from the bondage of the tribal society. It fortified the position of the anthropomorphic gods by placing them in a Pantheon, the inner mysteries of which were accessible only to the Brahmans. The Hindu brand of Monotheism, strictly speaking, is pantheism. It is the ideology of an unsolved social crisis — of social stagnation.

“The absence of a strictly monotheistic cult in religion reflected the political disunity of India. The social forces favouring the establishment of a centra-

lised state having failed to attain a sufficiently high level of development, the growth of a strictly monotheistic faith was an impossibility. The first centralised state in the history of ancient India was the Empire of Ashoka and that happened under the revolutionary banner of Buddhism. That also disintegrated, revealing the lack of an abiding social cohesion. The subsequent Empires of Chandragupta and Harshawardhana were more transient political phenomena. The outstanding feature of the political history of ancient and mediaeval India is the absence of a centralised state. The obvious reason of that characteristic feature was the inadequacy of economic conditions and weakness of the social forces associated therewith ..... Hence India never experienced political unity and did not develop a strictly monotheistic religion". *An outline of the History of Scientific Thought*: M. N. Roy.

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## CHAPTER II

### **REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION**

Revolution is a common feature of human history. It affects all departments of life. When life is chaotic and contradictory and when society is full of exploitation—the classes exploiting the masses intellectually, socially, economically and politically, then a revolution breaks out. It touches life, not only at its fringes but at its core also, so that it sets inprints on every aspect of life—social, political, economic and intellectual. The new force of revolution arises out of the contradictions in the old order of things. Hence revolution is a fight between the old order and the new. When the old world loses its progressive potentialities and becomes regressive a new world rises on the ruins and becomes the vanguard of progress and prosperity. Then a battle, tough and terrible, takes place between the die-hard conservatives of the old order and the bold champions of the new order. There will be a struggle not only ideologically but it may be physically between the revolution and the counter-revolution. A revolution is always progressive and a counter-revolution always reactionary. But, if the message of the revolution and its inspiring watchwords of equality, liberty, fraternity in every ramification of life, are not sufficiently made known to the masses, if the propaganda of the revolution is not made on an extensive scale, there is a chance of its defeat and the

consequent success of the counter-revolution. Therefore Mr. M. N. Roy styles history as a conflict between revolution and counter-revolution.

In ancient times revolutions took place through religion. The world was steeped in religious ideas. All problems of life were judged by religious standards. Hence when old religions passed away, progressive new ones came into being. Just as there is evolution in science, in the same way religion was evolutionary and therefore revolutionary. As man advances in knowledge, his ideas about religion also undergo changes. Therefore religions were naturalistic, polytheistic, monotheistic and pantheistic. This fact is clearly explained by Mr. M. N. Roy in his *History of Revolution*:

“ There was a time when religion and the so-called supernatural things were foremost in the minds of people. They lived as we do; but they lived in an atmosphere in which predominance was given to religion, faith, belief, God and supernatural things. Consequently a revolution in that period was largely a religious movement— a movement to introduce a change in the beliefs, ideas, patterns of thought and institutions of religion. All the revolutions of the ancient time were largely religious movements. As a matter of fact, the so-called world religions were all born of great revolutions. Buddhism was a revolution. Christianity rose as a revolution. And so did Islam. In China, the religion which was overwhelmed later on by Confucianism, namely Taoism, was also a revolutionary movement. The

motive force of all those revolution was revolt against the priesthood of the primitive natural religion."

History teaches us that whenever a revolution was a necessity, small groups of people felt it before the rest. They were subjected always to persecution, tyranny and oppression and were often looked down upon as morally depraved, inferior human beings, moved by selfishness and thirst for blood.

The fate of Christ is the fate of all revolutionaries. The cross is the fate of all pioneers of progress. It may take various forms. We do not know how many thousands of revolutionaries have been crucified. The cross has only taken different shapes. More civilized forms of crucifixion have been invented. Christ was crucified; but the spirit of Christ lived and the powerful Roman Empire, whose vanity was satisfied by the crucifixion of Christ, crumbled before the tremendous movement created by the spirit of Christianity. Likewise Lord Buddha renounced his kingdom and the pleasures of the palace, started a revolutionary movement against reactionary Brahmanism, and at last founded the world religion of Buddhism. Basava, the leader of the Lingayat movement, raised a crusade against the Hindu castesystem and idolatry. In this stupendous attempt, he had to fight not only the degenerate Buddhism and Jainism of his time, but Vedic Brahmanism also. Finally he had to renounce his ministership, and revolt against the monarchy of Bijjala.

## CHAPTER III

### **THE BUDDHISTIC REVOLUTION**

In India two great revolutions have occurred. One is the world revolution of Buddhism, and the other the democratic Lingayat revolution of Basava. Both combated the Vedic religious society and religion. They championed the cause of the oppressed masses including the untouchables. Buddha and Basava fought against the Brahmanic hegemony in Society and upheld the rights of the masses as against the upper classes in respect of religion. Both wrote their religious books not in the 'divine' language Sanskrit, which was the language of the upper-class Brahmin priests, but in the vernaculars of the lower-class people. The banner of equality, liberty and fraternity fluttered throughout the country—untouchables becoming touchables, dependent women becoming independent, and broad strata of society being humanized and democratised.

Lord Budha examined the contradictions of his society. He found that Vedic priestcraft was responsible for untold misery. Brahmin priests exploited the people economically, socially and religiously. The treasure of knowledge was a preserve of the Brahmin priestly class. Vedic sacrificial rites were common. The fatalism of Karma was rampant among the masses. The offering of goats and other animals in sacrifice prevailed. Objects like stone, trees etc. were deified. Mr. M. N. Roy describes the condition in detail:

“ Accumulation of the social surplus takes place through different channels in different periods of history. In the earliest time, offering to the gods served as the channel. The priests were the administrators of the process — the bankers, so to say, of that period. They not only acted as the agents of the gods, but also came to be the custodians, virtual possessors, of the social surplus which was absorbed by the periodical offerings to the gods prescribed by religion. That was very profitable for the agents of gods. They extracted more and more. One god was very angry one day; therefore he must be offered not one, but three goats or fowl or something else. The agents of the god could not possibly eat all those offerings. The surplus began to accumulate in their possession and consequently thanks to their control of the entire national wealth of the time, they became the rulers of society.”

Buddhism rose as a revolt on the reactionary horizon of Brahmin Vaidikism. It combated tooth and nail the Brahmin agency of exploitation by refuting the Vedic philosophy and religion, and set up an agnostic scientific philosophy as the ideology of a great social revolution. Exploitation of every kind was done away with. The revolution spread far and wide not only in India but in foreign countries like China, Japan and Burma. Great universities like Nalanda sprang up wherein foreign travellers and teachers studied the philosophy and religion of Buddhism. Buddhism reigned supreme for nearly a thousand years. It was the official religion

of Ashoka, the Napoleon of India. The tenets of Buddhism were the basis of Ashoka's administration.

Prof. B. N. Dasgupta describes the ideological conflict underlying Buddhism and Hinduism:

“Buddhism appealed to the people not as a substitute religion of the traditional type. It once again provided the core of life, without which life had become colourless and meaningless. It held out a new light, revealing the inner virtues of man, casting aside the external shell of rites and ceremonies. As against sacrificial duties, Buddhism laid emphasis on social activity and Ahimsa; prescribing no formal worship it preached *Chittashuddhi* (mental purity) and moral excellence, to relieve life of the mechanical routine of futile religious practices and cruel sacrifices. It opposed vain theological speculations with a vigorous humanism as the only way to perfection. It emphasized enlightenment as the highest aim of life and thus shifted the focus of duty from deity to man. Buddha was completely indifferent to metaphysical speculations; his direct disciples took a similar attitude. Early Buddhism believed neither in God nor in the Vedas. It believed only in a moral and virtuous life, unfettered by rituals. It proclaimed man's freedom from *Shastric* injunctions. Buddhism, therefore, was a protest against tradition and provided a rational scheme for the ritual-stricken, caste-ridden man at last to discover himself.....

“After king Mahapadma of the Nanda dynasty, whose bitterness against the Kshatriyas was indirect-



ly responsible for a sympathy with the Brahmins, the Maurya king, Chandragupta, fell completely in the grip of Kautilya. The reputation of that astute Brahmin author has travelled far and wide. But in the famous *Arthashastra* (Imperial Code of law of the Mauryas), he records a severely bitter attitude against the Sudras, even though his king was himself a Sudra. Kautilya's works with all his severity pale into insignificance before the other *Dharmashastras* written after his time, such as the *Manusmriti*.

“ The Great Emperor Ashoka promulgated laws which were calculated to bring equality among all and in all directions. In spite of their high moral tone, those laws, however, provoked a strong Brahmanical opposition, because they originated from a Sudra and a Buddhist. At the first opportunity, towards the end of the second century B. C., the priesthood, under the shelter and patronage of the Brahmin king Pushyamitra, engaged themselves in an offensive campaign against the Sudras and *Menecchas* (including the Buddhists). The doctrines of the Brahmanical reaction were compiled in the *Manusmriti*. Declared by the king as a code of law, the bible of reaction came to be known also as the *Manava-Dharma-Shastra*. It contained a series of unjust, reactionary, revengeful and bloodthirsty laws, which notwithstanding their usefulness as historical record, commemorate the fierce class struggle of the epoch. Be it said to the credit of

India that neither the Buddhists nor the Kshatriyas nor again the Sudras had attempted to avenge themselves in such a mean and cruel manner. The *Manusmriti* was a means and might have been the only means for safeguarding the power of the Brahmins by fortifying the *Varnashramadharmas*.

“ But the tide turned and Brahmanical supremacy ended. Upon the accession of the Kushan King, Kanishka, of non-Indian origin and a Buddhist by faith, the *Varnashramadharma* suffered a setback. The Brahmanical bitterness toned down in the *Yajnavalkyasmriti*, which was much more liberal than *Manusmriti*, but still sufficiently severe. The tide turned again; the Gupta dynasty came to power and resumed the oppression of the Sudras and the Buddhists. Themselves of a low and unknown origin, the Gupta kings became the upholders of Brahmanical orthodoxy. It was in the Gupta period that Hinduism was reinforced by the strictest measures of *Varnashramadharma*. It was probably then that the *Puranas* and the other scriptural texts were modified and interpreted with suitable interpolations. Deliberate attempts were also made to establish the *Varnashramadharma* as a permanent feature of the Hindu social system. *Vishnusmriti* was composed about that time. It was equally harsh against the Buddhists. Strict laws were promulgated prohibiting free travelling and free intercourse with other cultures. The worship of Vishnu became a prominent cult. Brahmanical arrogance

reached its climax when it mooted the idea that a Brahmin was equal to God.

“The tide turned again. Harshawardhana, a Vaishya Buddhist, attained kingship in the beginning of the seventh century A. D. He established an extensive empire and won the reputation of a great ruler not by persecuting Brahmanism, but by a just and tolerant reign, following the Buddhist ideals. The purpose of Harsha's policy was not to perpetuate power; he practised justice and toleration as an honest and devout Buddhist. Upon Harsha's death, about the middle of the seventh century, rose the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Magadha. They were Sudras by caste and Buddhists by faith. They conquered extensive territories all over India and established a vast empire. The ascendancy of Sudras and lower orders to powerful positions, particularly in the eastern parts of the country, once again threatened the supremacy of reactionary Brahmanism. Shankaracharya appeared soon thereafter.” †

But as Mr. M. N. Roy points out in his *Heresies of the Twentieth Century*:—

“Brahmanic absolutism was continuously reinforced by opportune interpolations. Supported by the insidiously fostered forces of popular superstition, Hindu orthodoxy resisted the triumphant march of the Buddhist revolution for nearly a thousand years and finally overwhelmed it. That was the most tragic event in the history of India. The cause of

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† The Marxian way: Vol. I No 4, Edited by M. N. Roy.

the defeat of Buddhism was that it was rather nihilistic than monotheistic. Consequently Buddhism went down in the morass of monastic absurdities and extravagances and was eventually contaminated by the very corruptions it had revolted against ... ..”

It was Shankaracharya the leader and theologian of Brahmanic reaction who celebrated the *Shraddha* of Buddhism, and since that funeral ceremony the culture of India has been a stunted growth and has prevented the generation of revolutionary forces.

“Victorious Hindu reaction, while arming itself with Shankaracharya’s ambiguous monotheism, could consolidate its shaken position only by fomenting the forces of popular ignorance and superstition ..... But Hindu theology, either of the pre-Buddhist era or of Shankaracharya, remained a monopoly of the Brahmin intellectual and monastic orders. The masses of the people were left without any religion except the superstitions of the degenerate Pauranic faith, and a rich store of social prejudices (caste, untouchability, vichar) jealously guarded and persistently fostered by Brahmanic orthodoxy.”

Supported by the insidiously fostered forces of popular superstition, Hindu orthodoxy resisted the triumphant march of the Buddhistic revolution for nearly a thousand years and finally overcame it. That was the most tragic event in the history of India. The cause of the defeat of Buddhism was that it was rather nihilistic than monotheistic. On the other hand, the rudiment of materialism inherent in a religion making

no place for God, was not boldly developed. That tendency was far in advance of the times. Social forces were too weak to undertake the task. Consequently, Buddhism went down in the morass of monastic absurdities and extravagances and was eventually contaminated by the very corruptions it had revolted against.

In Buddhism, the dissolving tendency was stronger than the tendency of reconstruction because of the weakness of the trading class. The revolution shook the foundation of Vedic society; the Brahmanic system was swept away. The basic tendency of dissolution of the exhausted social order gained ascendancy. Instead of being inspired by the positive doctrines of Buddhism and applying themselves to the uphill task of building a new social order under these difficult circumstances, a growing number of people were swayed by its negative aspect, adopted the line of least resistance, and preferred to run away from the problems of an all-shattering social and spiritual crisis in quest of *Nirwana*. Itself involved in a sever crisis, brought about by its internal conflict, Buddhist society could not withstand the fierce attack of Brahmanical reaction.

In order to defeat Buddhism and reestablish their authority the priestly class of Brahmins headed by Shankaracharya threw overboard the philosophical outcome of their own speculation, fragmentarily recorded in the Upanishads and went back a thousand years to the Vedas. The fierce clash between Buddhism and Hinduism must have thrown society into a great turmoil in the midst of which primitive man sought consolation

in supernatural agencies. The hope of a better life on this earth, even in some other birth, was more alluring than the perspective of getting merged in the great void. The desire to live is the essence of human nature. Brahmanism appealed to that desire. Return to the worship of the gods and they will look after your troubles and tribulations on this earth — and reward you in the afterlife if you do not again deviate from the path of *Dharma*. That was the appeal of the Brahmins. *Dharma* means observance of social regulations as codified by Manu with the object of establishing the basis of a Brahmanical counter-revolution. Hindu theology either of the pre-Buddhistic era or of Sankar remained a monopoly of the Brahmin priestly order. The masses were bereft of religion except the superstitions of the degenerate Puranic faith.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF SHANKAR'S VEDANTA

Dissatisfaction with the Vedic natural religion led to enquiry into the origin of objects. These speculations are recorded in the Upanishads. But the ironical fact was that the Brahmins who took to that line of thought maintained themselves by the rituals and ceremonies of natural religion. Therefore the evolution of thought in ancient India took the course of a headlong plunge into metaphysical speculation. Fragmentary records of early philosophic thought, i. e; the primitive enquiry into the origin of things, can be found in some Upanishads. But the Brahmins suppressed this scientific line of thought. A few Brahmins, some Kshatriyas and the non-priestly class participated in this speculation. But little record of the non-priestly contribution to that early enquiry has come down to us. If the Brahmin class had taken to the scientific thought, that would have jeopardised their social position. Their status in society prevented them from doing so. Therefore in the hand of the Brahmins this primitive inquisitiveness did not prove disruptive of the old traditions. Instead of refuting the Vedic religion the Brahmins defended it and stabilised it by constructing a speculative metaphysics. In the words of Mr. Roy:

“ Instead of challenging the authority of the Vedic Gods and consequently of their ministers the all-powerful Brahmins, the orthodox Hindu specula -

tion of the Upanishads sought to establish its doctrines and refute other more philosophical systems on the authority of the Vedas themselves. Therefore the metaphysical speculations of the Upanishads could not even lead to clear monotheism. It could set up only a very precarious form of monotheism. The conception of Brahman was precarious, because it did not necessarily do away with the pantheon of the anthropomorphic natural gods."

The trend of development thus led to crass contradictions in the Vedanta Sutras, because the philosophical and metaphysical trends conflict with each other wherever they are put together. The object of the Vedanta Sutras was to systematise the Upanishadic speculations into a homogeneous whole and to prove that the quasi-materialistic doctrines of Kanada, Kapila, Gautama and others were not borne out by those speculations. But the Upanishads contain thoughts which cannot be systematised. The old contradiction between philosophical and metaphysical threads reappears in the Sutras. Upanishads like the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya recognise the eternal existence of ether, fire and air. This view contradicts the existence of the absolute Brahman "only one without a second" which is set forth in all Upanishads. The dogma of the absolute existence of Brahman is the cardinal doctrine of Hindu philosophy, namely "when the Brahman is known everything is known" which is also posited in the Upanishads. Hence Upanishadic speculation could not be a basis for a system of philo-



sophy. The unorthodox thinkers pointed out this flaw in the Vedanta. If the Brahman alone exists in the beginning, then the ether, air etc. have an origin; *i. e.* they are created and the hypothesis of creation renders the absolute conception of Brahman untenable. On the other hand, if the elements have no origin, then the Brahmin ceases to be what it is assumed to be— “only one without a second”. Thus the infallibility of the scriptures is shaken. The monism of the Vedanta as interpreted by Shankar is based on this contradiction. In order to obviate any disturbance of the absoluteness of the Brahman, the elements must be without an origin. The difficulty of dualism or pluralism is overcome by declaring them to be identical with Brahman.

Shankar in his *Bhashya* admits: “If (there) is a second entity coexisting with Brahman from eternity, then it follows that Brahman has a second.” He found the fallacy of this dualism which invalidates the basic theorem “when Brahman is known, everything is known”. Then he tries to explain it by declaring that it has a parallel existence identical with Brahman. But that hardly solves the problem. Because he admits in the beginning of his *Bhashya* the duality of subject (ego) and object (non-ego) which are opposed to each other as darkness and light. Consequently Shankar had to invent the absurd doctrine of Maya (which cannot be traced in the Sutras themselves) to establish the purely spiritual unity of being.

Mr. M. N. Roy analyses threadbare the monism of Shankar;

"The doctrine of Maya is expounded as follows: 'Brahman is associated with a certain power called Maya or Avidya, to which the appearance of this entire world is due. This power cannot be called 'being', for 'being' is only Brahman. Nor can it be called non-being in the strict sense, for it at any rate produces the appearance of this world. It is in fact a principle of illusion: the undeniable cause, owing to which there seems to exist a material world. Maya thus constitutes the Upadhana, the material cause of the world. Maya belongs to Brahman as a Shakti. We may say that the material cause of the world is Brahman in so far as it is associated with Maya.' This doctrine obviously contradicts the conception of Brahman as the unitary and absolute existence. Brahman is devoid of all qualities. Yet Maya is assumed to be its Shakti. Moreover, Maya is conceived as an existence parallel to Brahman. The idea of 'association' presupposes two entities: similarly does the idea of 'belonging'.

"From the Aupanishadic Rishis down to Shankaracharya, no orthodox Hindu speculative thinker was able to prove how the diversities of nature could rise from a common cause. The sheer impossibility of the task ultimately drove Indian speculation to the monumental absurdity of the Mayavada .....

Shankaracharya's laboriously constructed Advaitavada solved the problem of the world by the simple contrivance of declaring it to be a dream. Nevertheless it could not get rid of a personal god. And a

personal god is utterly incompatible with the philosophical conception of unity in diversity.

“ The *Gita* is considered to be the most representative and authoritative work, containing the quintessence of the Hindu philosophy. It contains the following remarkable passages; ‘ There is no difference between the material and the immaterial. The formless, invisible and uncreated immaterial becomes materialised in the same way as water is crystalised into ice ’.

‘ Though false as the gleam of polished shell or as a mirage caused by the sun’s rays, yet no one at any time, past, present and future, can rid himself of the delusion ’ ( of the world ).

“ The most obvious contradiction is the admission of the reality of that which is declared in the same breath to be a delusion. A thing that existed in the past, exists in the present and will exist in the future, is eternal. The eternity of the ‘delusion’ of the world thus granted, the Brahman necessarily ceased to be what it is assumed to be, namely, “ only one without a second ”. The very foundation of Hindu philosophy is thus blown up.”

But what is true and great in the philosophy of Shankar is that everything individual, as finite, is merged by it in the gulf of the Nirguna Brahman. It loses sight of all that to the common mind passes for real. Its defect is that it fails truly to convert this negative gulf of Nirguna Brahman into the *terra firma* of

positive existence and actual life. It is with justice then that the Nirguna Brahman can be compared to the den of the lion where there are many steps to, but few from. The existence of the phenomenal world, the reality of the finite, if perishable, if null, is still not explained by Shankar. We cannot see what this finite world of maya and appearance is here for; any living connection to God fails. His Brahman is a principle of identity, not that of difference. It sacrifices all individual existence to the negative thought of unity *i. e.* Nirguna Brahman, instead of enabling this unity, by a living evolution into concrete variety, to negate its own barren negativity.

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## CHAPTER V

### **LINGAYATISM : A CONSISTENT MONOTHEISM**

Shankar's theology did not inspire the masses to initiative and activity. On the other hand, the masses were mystified by the Maya view of life. The priestly class dominated society. Oppression, inequality, injustice ran rampant. The false view of life and the world that they are an illusion led the masses to spiritual and social slavery. Besides, the doctrine of Karma snubbed and silenced the revolting spirit of the people. Polytheism was quite common. Superstitions and crude beliefs reigned supreme.

It was on such a reactionary horizon that the revolutionary cult known as Lingayatism rose in the twelfth century. Lingayatism under the leadership of Basava roused the masses by X-raying the religious and philosophical tenets of the Vedas, Upanishads, Shrutis and Smritis. The old doctrines and dogmas were thrashed threadbare. Even Jainism was cross-examined. Basava like Muhammad and Jesus Christ was a mass-prophet. By examining and analysing the old religions, Basava propounded the progressive doctrine of Lingayatism. Monotheism was the core of Lingayatism. Basava says:

“ Do not boast. There are no two or three gods. Note, there is only one God. To speak of two gods is false. Kudalasangamadeva is the only God. The Vedas say there are no two gods.”

Wherever I cast my glances, there you are  
my God; the form of all space You are,  
my God; universal eye You are, my God;  
universal mouth You are, my God ..... Oh,  
my God Kudalasangama.

But what is the difference between Vedantic monotheism and Lingayat monotheism? Vedantic Monotheism — that of the Upanishads — was based on primitive polytheism. The propounders of the doctrine were Brahmin priests who did not want to renounce the old natural Vedic religion, which was the staff of their lives. They built up an ambiguous structure of monotheism upon the basis of the old Vedic polytheism. Hence Vedantic monotheism was a patchwork, a compromise between the old and the new. Its monotheism was airy and shaky. It was an ideology of social stagnation. Shankar was the exponent of the doctrine. Lingayatism was a consistent monotheism. The Lingayat Saints did not hesitate to clear away the old debris of Vedic, Aupanishadic and Agamic polytheism. Polytheistic tendencies either of the Vedic type or of the Agamic variety were condemned outright. Hence, the position of the priestly class of Brahmins who were the agents of anthropomorphic gods in the Vedic days and representatives of the temple gods in Agamic times, was shaken. The Lingayat monotheistic movement was led by the non-priestly oppressed masses of India. Hence it could revolutionise life and society in all its aspects. The social stagnation, the economic suppression and the religious domination of Brahmanism

were effectively put a stop to by the Lingayat movement. But Basava did incorporate in his doctrine the positive and monotheistic tendencies fragmentarily expressed in the Vedas and Upanishads. That does not mean that Lingayatism was founded on the Vedas and Upanishads. If the Vedas were mainly and mostly dominated by polytheism, Vedantic monotheism was reared upon Vedic polytheism which was starkly contradictory. Lingayatism condemned the main polytheistic tendency of the Vedas and the airy structure of the Vedantic monotheism and constructed consequently a consistent monotheism. The Lingayat *Sharanas* examined and judged the Vedas, the Upanishads and the other sects like Jainism in the light of reason and experience (*Vichara* and *Anubhava*). The positive philosophical and theological tendencies that were suppressed by Brahminhood were developed. The outcome was Lingayatism. That does not mean that the *Sharanas* based their religion solely on the positive outcome of the Vedas and Shrutis. They were free thinkers and gave importance to initiative and independent thinking. They were rationalists and could judge other doctrines at the bar of reason and experience. They used to substantiate their argument at times by quoting Veda and Upanishad if the latter could support their thesis. They did not accept the whole and sole authority of the Vedic and Aupanishadic scriptures as did Shankaracharya. They accepted the authority of one's own reason and experience in the light of monotheism. The reference to Vedic and Vedantic scriptures was secondary. The analysis and the cross-exa-

mination of the Brahmanic literature were indeed marvellous. A single Vachana of a Sharana sums up the analysis of the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and Puranas. Thus clarifies Basava:

May I regard the Shastra as great ? It preaches Karma. May I hold the Veda to be superior ? It teaches animal slaughter. And may I think the Smriti to be best ? It searches for the object by keeping it before us. You are not at all found in these except in the triple social service, Oh Lord Kudalasangama.

May I say Vishnu is great ? He suffered much in his ten *Avatāras*. Is Brahma great ? He lost his head. But is the Veda superior ? It cannot realise the Linga though it is praised variously. May I hold the Shastra to be best ? But it is verbose. Is the Purana ultimate ? It deals with Karma in previous births. If I regard Agama as the be-all and end-all, it has gone with the wind. Therefore, God Kudalasangama alone is real. The rest are all false.

Since Gautuma believed in the divinity of a Brahmin, he was held guilty of cow-slaughter. As Bali regarded the Brahmin as God, he suffered bondage. Because



Karna held the Brahmin to be divine, he had to lose his coat of mail. Daksha trusted that a Brahmin was God; therefore, he got a sheep-head. Parashurama believed that the Brahmin was divine; consequently, he was drowned in the sea. Nagarjuna pinned his faith on the divinity of a Brahmin; as a result, he had to lose his head. But the Saints of our Lord Kudalasanga attained bliss by regarding the Brahmin as a common devotee of God.

By worshipping Vishnu I saw people got their shoulders burnt. By worshipping a Jain, I found people living naked. By the worship of Mailar ( i. e. a dog-deity ) people acted like dogs and I saw them bark. But I observed that one became a devotee of God by worshipping the Saints of our Kudalasanga.

Sire, Brahmins do not practise what they preach. What shall I say to this? They want clothes for themselves; their Shastra also needs clothes. Oh Lord Kudalasangama, this is an illustration to show that Brahmins, being born of Shudras, will take to eating beef.

The Vachanas just quoted will serve the purpose. Space does not permit me to quote hundreds of such

Vachanas in order to substantiate the basis of the thesis. Enough has been quoted to show that Lingayat monotheism fought the doctrine of Vedic Karma and the fourfold caste system. It was a movement of social progress, economic prosperity and political freedom.

Scholars and philosophers can find in Lingayatism an example of sound monotheism, as rigorous as the monotheism of Islam and as puritan as Christian monotheism. If Buddhism failed because it was nihilistic rather than monotheistic, Lingayatism which rose after Shankar succeeded and survives in India as a community of nearly ten millions of people densely settled in Karnatak and thinly scattered in Maharashtra, Andhra, Mysore and other parts, it being monotheistic rather than nihilistic. Was the movement purely social and religious? Had its monotheism a political basis or bias? Was the concept of the State based on central unity or on a federal structure?

The Lingayat State was instituted in the religious parliament called *Anubhava Mantapa* at Kalyan, the Headquarters of the community. A centralised democratic concept of the State took shape in the daily deliberations of the religious Academy. The religious Assembly consisted of hundreds of members, male and female, named *Sharanas* and *Sharanis*. Socio-economic and religious problems were discussed. Gradually, the basic principles of a political state were evolved. Members from various vocations, high and low, met there and discussed many problems of mundane existence. Freedom of thought was the basis of the institution. The procee-

dings and dialogues of the day-to-day deliberations were recorded by a *Sharana* named Shantarasa. Those proceedings were compiled into a book which is called *Shunya-Sampadane* ( the attainment of the void or *Nirvana*. ) But, alas ! Basava had to face many difficulties from the orthodox. Besides, decadent Jainism could not tolerate the revolutionary reform movement of Basava. No sooner were the basic principles of the Kalyan State shaped than it had to fight orthodox Brahmanism and decaying Jainism, which were propped up by the power of king Bijjala, under whom Basava was the Premier. In other words, it was a fight between democracy and monarchy. The democratic State was yet in the womb. Consequently it could not defeat monarchy; but it is a fact that Lingayatism was on the point of ripening into a political state. The reactionary forces became conscious of it. The catastrophe followed soon after.

But the fame of the *Anubhava Mantapa* spread far and wide, so that devotees of Shiva flocked in from Pandya, Chola, Chera, Gujarath, Orissa, Bengal, Kasmir and Nepal. The king of Kasmir came with his wife and joined the institution. There came from the South a ruler named Sakalesh Madarasa who took part in Basava's movement. Likewise we hear of Adayya, a wealthy merchant from Gujarath, of Marula Shankardev from Kalinga ( Orissa ), of Maidun Ramayya from Andhra, of Yekanta Ramayya from Kuntal, an extreme devotee of Shiva. A batch of women Saints like Mahadevi Akka, Satyakka and Muktayakka under the leadership of Ajaganna, is said to have marched there from

the neighbourhood of Ballegavi, a city of historic importance in the Mysore State. From Banavasi ( North Kanara ) came Prabhudev who was elected the President of the Assembly. From Hipparage ( Bijapur ) came Madival Machayya, and Shiddharam from Sholapur.

The *Anubhava Mantapa* was marked by freedom of thought, expression and action. Every man and woman contributed his or her own quota of experience and laid it at the feet of ' Sunya Simhasana ' which Prabhudev, the prince of Saints, graced by his presence. The share of experience of every Saint was called his ' Sampadane ' ; hence, the word 'Sunya Sampadane'.

At first sight the word sunya appears to have a Buddhistic origin. Can the Lingayat Sunya Sampadane be identical with the Sunyavada of Buddhism ? In the Lingayat Vachana Shastra the expression Sunya Sampadane has a different connotation. Firstly, it differs from the Dvaita conception in which the individual soul, though eternal as the universal soul, can never attain perfection as the latter. Secondly, the Advaita conception of Shankar is also rejected for the reason that it denies the reality of the individual soul and the material world and upholds the identity of the individual and the universal. But in the Shaktivisishtadvaita philosophy of Lingayatism, it is held that the material world and the individual soul have a reality in God and these cannot be distinguished in the *Avyakṭa* or unmanifested state called *Nishkāla* in the Vachana literature. This mysterious union is illustrated either by the magnet and its power or matter and energy, or the sun and its rays. It

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has all the negative aspects that can be had from the Buddhistic and the Vedantic conception and the positive aspects that can be found in mysticism. Practically, Sunya Sampadane is somewhat similar to St. Paul's interpretation of his spiritual experience— "It is no longer that I live, but Christ liveth in me". In the phraseology of Lingayatism it is the transformation of 'Anganga into Linganga' which modern psychology styles sublimation.

Lingayatism does not advocate Shankar's view of Maya. Wealth is not Maya; woman is not Maya; earth is not Maya, but a man's greed is Maya. Basava discards the doctrine:

Why are you boasting of the bughbear of  
the non-existent Maya ? Why are you vociferously  
professing without realising that  
the non-existent Maya does not exist at all ?  
When one examines oneself, one finds that  
all this is nothing but God Kudalasangama.

The big booming world is real. Worldly problems are also real; because the world is a creation of God Shiva. How can God's creation be unreal ?

But how is the diversity of phenomena accounted for ? The static conception of God Shiva cannot be the origin of material diversity. That is accounted for by the concept of Shakti. Then what is the Lingayat view of Reality ? The concept of Reality is Shiva-Shakti, *i. e.* static-dynamic Reality. Shakti has its origin in Shiva.

Havinahal Kallayya, a Sharana, explicitly holds that Shakti originates in Shiva:

Just as the invisible particles of water in the sky are turned into hailstones, so Shiva's ideas assumed the shape of Shakti, which is the first step in the origin of the universe.

Shiva created the whole universe including the galaxy of planets and stars for the enjoyment of his Shakti. The new concept of Shiva-Shakti is a personality, not a blank absolute; it expresses itself. It is that centre of Silence or Shiva wherefrom Shakti emanates; or it is that centre of permanence whose expression is activity or dynamism. It is therefore a static dynamic view of Reality where one cannot be thought of without the other. All evolution or dynamism rests on a permanent background which is silence or Shiva, but is instinct with Shakti or will. The Reality is, therefore, Shiva<sup>t</sup> Shakti, silence expressing dynamism and dynamism resting in silence; one is inextricably bound up with the other. That is the whole character of Reality.

Prof. Anila Kumar Sarkar, Rajendra College, Chapra, enlightens us further on the subject:

"This is the Realistic position of the Veera-shaiva or Lingayat doctrine. It tries to cover up its idealism in the form of realism of Shiva-Shakti. After all, they are only conceptions. But to understand the one, is to go to the other. In other words, the thought of the one involves the thought of the

other. Shiva can only be understood from its reference to Shakti and Shakti can be only understood from its reference to Shiva. The relation between them as expressed here is not the thought of the continuum of Space Time of Alexander. But here there is only an effort to clarify the concept of Shiva-Shakti by giving expression to a new type of experience, which renders their separate existence impossible. In the thought of Shiva the inner core is discerned, but that inner core is not a potential centre, but a pure activity centre, not merely an intuition, but a centre instinct with strength or vitality or will, a centre of stress constantly expressing activity. But it is thoroughly full and perfect, therefore, ' silent '. Its fullness is its joy and it expresses its consciousness of joy. The Shakti that surrounds it is nothing but the expression of that consciousness; but that does not prove the unreality of Shakti; rather it reveals the inner character of Silence or Truth that it is instinct with Shakti or strength or dynamism. This is the understanding of the fullness of reality.

" All expression or evolution is for the understanding of Silence. There is thus expression or absorption. It is so full and silent, so full of freedom and joy, it constantly expresses itself and realises itself. Its passage is nothing but self-absorption and enjoyment. Therefore, the Veerashaiva doctrine turns to another aspect of it. This is its practical aspect. It is nothing but the elevation of the lower

types of movement to higher types of movement, for the 'stress' is elevated into 'Silence', process ending in realisation. The highest silence is the Silence of Shiva, 'Sarvanga-Lingasthala', the only ideal of the *Sharanas*, the followers of the Veerashaiva philosophy. In the words of Kumar Swamiji (Navakalyanmath, Dharwar) himself: 'In this greater ideal which the Sharana calls it *the Sarvanga-Lingasthala*, all the beauties and harmonies of the mysterious infinite life are thrown open to man and every movement of being shall be felt as divine. Life is to be completely divinised and humanity installed in a divine society. This is the promise of Veerashaiva Philosophy'."

From the above account it is abundantly clear that the Lingayat concept of reality is quite different from the ambiguous concept of Shankar's Brahman. By recognising the reality and equality of Shakti with Shiva the Lingayat Absolute is rendered dynamic, whereas Shankar's monism negates the reality of Shakti and renders the Absolute an abstract blank entity. Hence Shankar denies reality to the world and calls it an illusion. This view of the world would serve the purpose of suppressing revolutionary forces. The spirit of revolt would be snubbed by such a doctrine. Thereby Shankar, the leader of the upper-class Brahmins, found it easy to impose upon the masses the social doctrine of Vedic *Varnashramadharma*— the charter of Indian social slavery.



The Bhagavadgita is called the Bible of Hinduism. It is said that all streams of Indian thought meet in it. The Aryan urge of activity, the rituals of the Mimamsā, the meditation of the Vedānta and Yoga, the knowledge of the Nyaya, Vaisheshika and Sankhya, the moral life and service of Buddhism, the universal love of Vaishnavism, the detachment of the Vedānta and the earthly enjoyment of Lokayatavada— all these elements were harmoniously blended into a more popular philosophy which was also the only practical religion. But what is the view of the Gita about the world? The Gita version is the same as Shankar's. The world is regarded as a huge delusion. Further the monotheism of the Gita is dubious. The *Varnashramadharma* could be conveniently enforced upon the masses by such a view of life. Besides the Gita preaches Karma. But Lingayatism was a revolt against both. True, the Gita wants to divide society into four castes according to the merit of an individual. The caste system is sanctioned by Shree Krishna the God. Hence it is ordained by divinity— since God is the divider of the society, his sanction will be final, thereby the initiative of the individual is curbed. Because the caste system is created by God, it becomes hereditary and the masses cannot oppose the order of God. But Lingayatism retained the independence of the individual. Any man may take to any vocation or profession and has a right to change it in his life-time. It advocates freedom in the choice of profession.

Finally, Gandhism is also a monotheism. Since Gandhism is an outcome of the Veda and Vedānta, its

monotheism is necessarily marked by revivalism. It is Vedantic. True to its tradition, it reinstates the Vedic *Varnashramadharma*. It may take a different form, but the substance of it is the same. It is the philosophy of the upper classes. It is the social doctrine of the *status quo*. Hence it is reactionary.

Mr.M.N.Roy sums up the whole trend of philosophic thought in the following:

“ It is mistaken to regard Buddhism as distinct from Hinduism. The relation between the two was approximately analogous to that between Protestantism and Roman Christianity. Buddhism incorporated the positive outcome of Indian antiquity. Its geneology can be traced to the Upanishads, through the rationalist, quasi-materialist systems of philosophy. Buddhism also had much in common with early Christianity. Both were revolts against the tyranny of antique society and as such ideologies of social dissolution. Antique society was breaking down; distressed individuals wanted to run away from the resulting chaos and confusion. They were attracted by the ideals of Nirvana and the Kingdom of Heaven. Christianity survived the anarchism implicit in its early doctrines with the help of Greek philosophy, particularly of Plato. Indian antiquity did not produce a Plato. Therefore, Buddhism succumbed under the weight of its original Nihilism. But Indian society just managed to escape a complete collapse: In a way, Shankar was the St. Peter of India. He did not institutionalise a new revealed

religion. He restored orthodox Hinduism on the ruins of Buddhism.

“ There is little difference between Buddhist Sunyavada and Shankar's Advaitavada, if the latter is strictly logical. But Shankar buttressed his monism with a deism which sanctioned the vulgarities of primitive religion. His triumph, thus, was not a proof of the living nature, or alertness, of the Hindu mind influencing Buddhism. It marked the victory of counter-revolution which ushered in the Indian middle ages. Indian society is still lingering in the twilight of mediaevalism, which seeks sanction in the sacred tradition of the special synthetic genius of the Aryan culture. The dialectic view of history should not reinforce that chain of spiritual slavery....

“ The Veerashaivas, otherwise known as the Lingayats, eventually rose in revolt against that Brahmanical degeneration. On the other hand, migrated to the South, Buddhism and Jainism had also equally degenerated. Veerashaivism was a revolt against both ..... The name of the reformer Basava is practically unknown outside his native Karnatak, and the Lingayat Movement remained confined to that neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Basava perhaps was among the forerunners of the ‘ Heretics ’ of mediaeval India and Lingayatism the earliest chapter of Indian Reformation. Basava lived in the twelfth century ..... Basava became the minister to a Jain king against whom he later on led a popular insurrection. ‘ Basava gave a popular, if not a

political, turn to Saivism ... He believed that the religious life of the people was closely allied to their social welfare. In the words of Rice, he carried on a social revolution side by side with a religious reformation.' "†

"Finally, the philosophical aspect of Gandhism may be characterised as the sum total of traditional Indian thought, Indian religion and Indian philosophy. Gandhiji is a devoutly religious man..... Gandhiji speaks sometimes as a pure believer; he talks about God and the power that he derives from prayer; and again he talks, particularly when he derives his inspiration from the Gita, as a believer in the teleological world order, *i. e.* in a universal law, which is not subordinated to human will. But whatever might be the fundamental principle of Gandhism, either the belief in a personal God and the power of prayer, or the teleological view of the universe, it is clear that neither of those conceptions can be in any way reconciled with the Marxian conception of life and human activity..... The philosophy of socialism is Materialism which repudiates religion, rejects Spiritualism, in other words, contradicts the teleological view of the universe and life ..... Because the most fundamental part of socialism and of the teachings of Karl Marx is dialectical Materialism, the materialistic view of life ...

"The Mahatma admits tacitly that objective reality is the 'Truth'. So, 'Truth', after all, cannot be so beautiful as he lyrically proclaims it to be.

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† The Marxian way: Vol. I Nos 2 and 4, Edited by M. N. Roy.

The realities of life in class-ridden society are ugly. But for the metaphysicians like the Mahatma, 'Truth' is absolute and eternal. Therefore the ugly realities of life cannot and should not be changed. They must be accepted as providentially ordained. That is the implication of the Mahatma's 'Truth'. Incorporating this metaphysical dogma in its creed, the Congress commits itself to the defence of the established social order .....

"The ideal of non-violence is a very noble ideal. Mahatma Gandhi has made an invaluable contribution to human thought by insisting that mankind can live in an atmosphere of non-violence. But he has not yet shown us the way. He is an idealist. But he is not a realist. Socialists are also defenders of non-violence. But we are not mere idealists. We do not disregard realities. We shall be able to establish an atmosphere of non-violence only by changing society in such a manner that the exploitation of the majority by a minority will be neither possible nor necessary. We have no difference with Gandhiji as regards the ideal; the difference is about the method for the realisation of the ideal.....

"Realities of life are true. Illusions are false. But the striving to change the established conditions of life, is real and therefore equally true. But the metaphysical mode of thought does not view 'Truth' in this dialectic sense. Therefore, in practice, Gandhism glorifies falsehood as 'Truth'." \*

\* Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism: M. N. Boy.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE INDIAN REFORMATION

The cultural history of the later middle ages of India after the re-establishment of Brahmanical Hinduism by Shankaracharya still remains to be written. The religious movement known as Lingayatism which arose in the earlier part of that period, can be regarded as the herald of the Indian Reformation. Kabir, Tukaram, Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Nanak, are well-known names; so is the history of the religious movements they respectively led, and the doctrines they preached. The name of the reformer Basava is practically unknown outside his native Karnatak, and the Lingayat movement remained confined to that neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Basava was among the forerunners of the "heretics" of mediaeval India, and Lingayatism was the earliest chapter of the Indian Reformation. Basava lived in the 12th century.

As Prof. Sakhare has shown in his *History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion*, the Indian Reformation had been heralded by earlier heretical movements. Tacitly, though emphatically, he traces the ancestry of the Lingayats to the 'Keshin' and 'Vratyas' mentioned in the Atharva Veda. That is a sound historical view. They attached greater importance to a life of austerity and meditation than to the performance of sacrificial rites. These early heretics were believed to be special favourites of Rudra-Shiva.

Historically, as distinct from myths and mythology, Shaivism became a powerful social factor during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. That was a period of chaos and anarchy, after the defeat of the Buddhist revolution. It was only natural that the worshippers of the God of Destruction should become the rulers of the country in that atmosphere, so very appropriate for "Tandavanritya". A reconstruction of the chronology of that period leads to the conclusion that nearly 200 years intervened between the downfall of the Kushanas and Andhras and the establishment of the Gupta Empire by Samudra Gupta. Historians have now collected material which goes to prove that large tracts of the country during that period came under the rule of the Bara Shivas. There is also some evidence to the effect that the latter defeated the last Kushana king. From their name, it is evident that they were worshippers of Shiva. "The Bara Shiva rule was marked by asceticism. They merely preside over a confederacy of States and foster freedom everywhere."

Notwithstanding its heretical traditions and reformist future, Saivism thrived as a reaction to Buddhism and Jainism during these early centuries of the Christian era. That was very largely due to the fact that before its fall Buddhism had degenerated into a corrupt monastic system and vulgar idolatry. But in course of time, Brahmanical orthodoxy was re-established in Northern India, and Saivism together with the sister cult of Vaishnavism was driven to the South. There again, particularly in the Tamil countries, Saiva theism degene-

rated into Hindu orthodoxy in the fight against Buddhism. It found its prophet in a Brahmin who was a great enemy of the Buddhists and Jains. The Veerasaivas, otherwise known as Lingayats, eventually rose in revolt against that Brahmanical degeneration. On the other hand, having migrated to the South, Buddhism and Jainism had also equally degenerated. Veerasaivism was a revolt against both. Basava became the minister of a Jain king against whom he later led a popular insurrection. "Basava gave a popular, if not a political, turn to Saivism . . . . He believed that the religious life of the people was closely allied to their social welfare. In the words of Rice, he carried on a social revolution side by side with a religious reformation."

Dr. Nandimath in his *Handbook of Virasaivism* sets forth the view that "the outstanding feature of the revived Virasaivism is its zeal for social reform". Since the symbol is given such an important place in the Lingayat religion, Dr. Nandimath also discusses the various interpretations, and rejects the phallic doctrine, though rather summarily. He considers the mystic interpretation to be rather fanciful, yet he prefers it to others. However, the following statement seems to dispose of the controversy by focussing attention on the obvious significance of the practice of wearing the traditional symbol on the body.

"Virasaivism disapproved image-worship as strongly as possible and maintains that the Supreme is to be worshipped in one's own Istalinga, the Linga obtained from the Guru at the time of initiation. It looks with



disfavour even upon the worship of the Sthavaralinga, the Linga consecrated in temples.”

The practice evidently was adopted as declaration of freedom from the priesthood who stood between the God and the devotee. In order to worship, one need not go to the temple, and there be tyrannised over by priests.

Most probably the Lingayats as well as other Saivas of modern and mediaeval times sincerely believed in the mystic interpretation of the symbol of the Linga. But that does not alter the genesis of the cult, and the devotee need not be apologetic about what may be called a common human heritage. To worship the phallus was quite natural for the savage, and no Indian historian would maintain that Indian humanity never went through the stage of savagery.

The historic significance of the Lingayat movement, that earlier stage of the Indian Reformation, would be better appreciated by isolating it from the tendentious controversy about the meaning of the Linga symbol. It was a social revolution as all mediaeval religious reformations were. Dr. Nandimath's monograph depicts the Lingayat movement as such.

In their introduction to the English version of the Vachanas of Basava, S. S. Basavanal and K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar make the crucial point further clear when they write:

“To purify religion Basava felt compelled to discourage the cruder forms of idolatry and temple worship, and also to free his followers from the tutelage of traditional priests who were in his time

apparently in the habit of observing the outward forms of sanctity, while shamelessly denying the meaning inherent in them. On the other hand, the Linga worn always on the body became symbolic of the presence of God; the body became God's own home, and hence itself became sacred. Basava's insistence on the adequacy of the human body to serve as God's home comes like a breath of spring breeze after the aridity of meaningless penances."

The following stanza from Basava's Vachanas can be regarded as the *leitmotif* of that earlier chapter of the Indian Reformation which was the Lingayat movement:

*"There be some that are rich;  
They may build temples to you  
(or they may not)—  
Stony, mortal, edifices !  
I am not rich— poor me !  
And yet, be my legs the pillars,  
My body the shrine,  
My head the golden pinnacle;  
Thus will I decree  
your imperishable home,  
O Lord, Kudala Sangama !"*

(Extracts from Roy's review of books on Lingayat Religion.)

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LINGAYAT PHILOSOPHY:

*What is the nature of the concept of Shiva-Shakti?*

*Shiva is Existence and Shakti is Consciousness.*

*Realise that Existence itself is Consciousness.*

*And there is no duality, Lord Guheshwara.*

*—Allama Prabhu*

After the fall of Buddhism, the Indian masses were subjected to the villainy and tyranny of Brahmanical reaction. People were oppressed under the yoke of the reinstated *Varnashramadharma*. Shankar's pure monism was the philosophical background of society. His teaching can be summarised as the doctrine of Maya, that the world and life and their throbbing problems were an illusion, and that the ultimate entity, that is Brahman, was the on'y true reality. The masses were misguided and disillusioned about their duty and vocation during their worldly existence. They became disinterested in their callings and were hypnotised by the future grandeur of the life after death. Pure monism as the philosophical background to society led to the exploitation of the masses by the classes, suppressing the diverse tendencies of society. Unity in diversity was not a maxim of the monistic morality of Shankar.

But the Lingayat movement headed by the revolutionary Basava ushered in a new era in Indian history by championing the cause of the exploited toiling masses.

Basava, though a Brahmin by birth, did not undergo even the Upanayana ceremony of Brahmins, and even as a boy he objected to Brahmanism and its rites. He fought the old Brahmanic order and its philosophy and set up a new progressive revolutionary religion and philosophy. The age-long slavery of the masses embedded in the Vedic culture was shattered and the new order of society of Lingayats came into being. This freedom-intoxicated movement cut asunder the shackles of exploitation of myriads including the untouchables and women.

The Sharanas, as the Lingayat revolutionaries were called, rebutted the deceptive hair-splitting monistic philosophy of Shankara and exposed threadbare the dangerous implications of the doctrine of Maya. Basava refuted his dubious monotheism and consequently toppled over the hoary structure of the Vedic caste system.

A philosophy which does not touch the problems of life on earth is barren. A philosophy is the underlying principle of a society. Any race or nation has some philosophy or other as its basis. In ancient times philosophy was wedded to religion, but in systems like the Sankhya and Vaishesika, the philosophic aspect was more marked than the theological. Again Buddhism was the culminating point. It was primarily philosophic and scientific. Therefore society became revolutionary and progressive under Buddhism. The more scientific and philosophic a system is the more progressive and prosperous the people are likely to become. Philosophy is interested in mundane problems. But the pure monistic philosophy of Shankar

was a mere abstract system. The concept of a void reality, Nirguna, Nirakar Brahman, leaves no room for explanation of the multifarious vicissitudes of the world and life. Brahman is destitute of all qualities. It is devoid of all attributes — thought, activity, etc. Yet Maya is assumed to be its Shakti which constitutes Upadhana, the material cause of the world. The material cause of the world is the Brahman in so far it is associated with Maya. But the concept of the unitary spiritual absolute Brahman goes against the doctrine of Maya. This is a great flaw in Shankara. To begin with the material world is dismissed as an illusion. Real existence has nothing to do with it. As to the question how Vedanta accounts for the moving power and diverse nature of life, Shankara connects Maya fictitiously to Brahman in wedlock as it were. But this is really a deadlock in his system. The impersonal Brahman becomes personal, which is a stark contradiction.

But a Lingayat Sharana solves the deadlock of Shankar by qualifying his monism with Shakti or Energy. The World and Shakti are not myth or illusion but real. A Sharana labels his system as *Shaktivishishtadvaita* — Energy qualified monism. The reality in Lingayatism is neither Mind nor Matter only, neither Brahman nor Shakti only, but a fair combination of both. It is Shiva-Shakti. The big booming world is both a unity and diversity. Shiva represents the silence or centre; Shakti the dynamic. There is change, law of energy or Shakti everywhere; But there must be something that changes. Motion without the object moving becomes abstract.

Further Shiva and Shakti are related in identity. This static-dynamic Reality, Shiva-Shakti, represents a synthesis of the abstract, static, bloodless Absolute of Bradley and the dynamic diverse flesh and blood reality of Bergson. Bradley is purely intellectual, and Bergson merely intuitive and emotional. But life requires both intellect and intuition. Shakti in the Lingayat philosophy is located in, Shiva, and the Sharana finds an identity between Shiva and Shakti, between Truth and Will. The Divine appears to him to have a dynamic aspect, but to address the Absolute only as dynamic is not to state the whole truth. Behind the dynamic aspect of the Absolute is the static which is the 'Centre of movement'. Thus Allama Prabhu observes:

What is the nature of the concept of Shiva-Shakti? Shiva is existence and Shakti is consciousness. Realise that existence itself is consciousness. And there is no duality, Lord Guheshwara.

Just as Shakti is related to Shiva, in the same way Jangama i.e., the individual Soul is related to Linga i.e., the Universal Soul. There is no Linga without Jangama nor is Jangama without Linga. Individuality and Universality are reciprocal and relative. Hence the individuality is retained in the universality. That is the significance of the Lingayat concept of Linga-Jangama. The point is further clarified by Channasangamadeva and, Siddharama in their Vachanas.

Body is life ( jiva ); life ( jiva ) is body. Just as these two are entwined so do Linga and Jangama. Linga and Jangama are combined so harmoniously, that you find Jangama in Linga and Linga in Jangama. Shiva cannot exist without Shakti nor does Shakti do without Shiva. Just as flower and fragrance, space ( akasha ) and air are respectively combined together, so is Jangama without duality joined with Linga. In fact, such Jangama is itself Linga, Lord Kudalachannasangama.

Can we separate sweetness from sugar? Can we have Ghee without butter? Can we create the world without earth? Listen! There is no Linga without Jangama nor is there Jangama without Linga, Kapila-siddhamallikarjuna.

Shri Kumaraswamiji, Nava-kalyanmatha, Dharwad enlightens us further on this matter:

“ Bergson with an ‘immediacy of Intuition’ and Bradley with an ‘immediacy of experience’ proceed on parallel lines to demonstrate the dynamism of Will (Shakti) and the conservation of Truth (Shiva). But the Sharana comes into effect a synthesis between Bergson and Bradley, between will and truth, between dynamism and conservation by saying that the Absolute or God is the impersonal persona-

lity, that it is at once transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic. The static aspect is called Sthala, Shiva or Linga and the dynamic aspect of it is called Kala, Shakti or Jangama in Veerashaiva philosophy. This Shakti is the dynamic divine will which is the personality of the Absolute Truth or Shiva Linga ..... This Divine will exists, therefore, in God by the relation of identity that is *Samarasya* which has been expressed very vividly by the Sharanas in their sayings: one of the sayings of Basava in this connection runs thus:

As submarine fire is hid in the waters of  
the seas, as a ray of ambrosia is hid in the  
moon, as fragrance is hid in the flower, as  
affection is hid in the maiden, so is the  
Truth hid in the heart of Will, O Lord  
Kudalasangama .

“ The Sharana, therefore, emphasises the integral unity of Shiva and Shakti and does not commit himself to the extremes of Shakti completely withdrawn into Shiva or Shiva completely losing itself into Shakti .....

“ It is this integral association of Shiva-Shakti or *Shakṭivishishtadvaita* that is the Veerashaiva “ Weltanschauung ”— the world view of a Veerashaiva. For he views the whole world as an expression of the divine will under the stress and guidance of the divine Truth. In the idea of the Sharana, the



world is, therefore, an objective fact, a real modification but one which makes no difference to the essence of Truth ... *Shristhi* is the becoming of Shiva in the extension of its own being Shakti."\*

Finally Prof. Anil Kumar Sarkar, Rajendra College Chapra, sums up the philosophic position of Lingayatism:

"As against the advaita concept of Sankar, it does not hold the view of Maya. Its principle of Shakti or Strength that accounts for the dynamic universe is fitted into the concept of dynamism ( Shakti ). That is realised in the centre of silence ( Siva ). There is a perfect relation of identity between dynamism and silence. One is a necessary concept of the other. Viewed thus, the doctrine of Veerashaivism has not got to account for any Maya or indefinable character of the manifest universe. The dynamic universe has its habitat in the centre of silence or Siva. By this emphasis on this new type of concept and experience, the Veerashaiva philosophy tries to claim a higher sort of consideration from the thinkers of the world."†

The Shaktivisisthadvaita of the Lingayats is not identical with the Visisthadvaita of Ramanuja. The concept of Ramanuja's Absolute is an organic unity of God & Prakriti. But Prakriti is assigned a secondary place in that the element of *Visesya*, i. e, God, controls the subordinate Prakriti and other elements, i. e. *Visesanas*

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\* The Veerashaiva Weltanschauung: Shri Kumaraswamiji,

† Journal of the Literary Committee Vol, I No. 3,

“ The *Viesaras* including *Prakriti* cannot by hypothesis exist by themselves separately. The complex whole ( *Visistha* ) in which they are included is described as a unity. Hence the name *Visisthadvaita*”

The relation between God and *Prakriti* being one of subordination, not of identity, the system is not dynamic. Besides, Ramanuja's cult advocates *Avataras* and incarnations of God and believes in the worship of idols and is hence other-worldly in its outlook. That is not the case with Lingayatism which, like Christianity and Islam, is mundane and this-worldly.

Buddhism boldly asserted the dynamic of *Prakriti* so much so that it was more philosophic than any other system. It was matter-dominated rather than spirit-inspired. It noted the dialectic view of nature, that the continuous change in bodies owing to atomic combination and separation, necessarily involves a continuous process of the old perishing and the new growing. Mr. M. N. Roy sums up the philosophic role of Buddhism:

“As the composite outcome of all the positive in the whole previous history of Indian thought, Buddhism shook the foundation of the hoary edifice of Brahmanical orthodoxy. It disputed the authority of the scriptures; vigorously condemned the sacrificial rites and rituals of the Vedic Natural Religion; it denied the existence even of an impersonal first cause, the Brahman of the Upanishads; and discarded the doctrine of soul. For the first time, there began to develop in India a system of truly philosophic thought

having for its point of departure the atomism of the Vaisheshik system and the rationalist mechanistic conception of Nature contained in the Sankhya system." †

Consequently Buddhist idealism retained its philosophical character as against the theological nature of the Brahmanical metaphysics. It asserted the existence of the world: it came near to the modern philosophical conception of the identity of the object and subject. The dynamic of Lingayatism recognised the identity of the object Shakti and the subject Shiva.

Lastly Jainism, another ancient heterodox sect, viewed Prakriti as dynamic and consequently posited the reality of the existence of the world. The Jains ex-rayed even the soul and found it was composed of atoms. By their ingenious dialectic logic they rejected the doctrine of the Brahman.

"The Jain philosophers maintained that contradictory attributes, such as being and non-being, could belong to one and the same thing. They subjected the conceptions of absoluteness, unity and eternity to their reasoning. The result was rejection of the doctrine of the Brahman ... The Jains also believed in Soul ... They thought soul was composed of an infinite number of particles— 'soul-atoms'— which were constantly increasing and decreasing. That, in their opinion, did not affect the permanence of the soul; for a thing can be permanent and non-permanent at

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† An Outline of the History of scientific thought, M. N. Roy

the same time. For example, although the water is constantly flowing, the stream of water is always there. The ontological counterpart of this logic is obvious: the phenomenal world is permanent and real with all its continual changes and transitoriness.”†

The trend of Jain logic runs in the thought of a Lingayat Sharana. The concept of Shiva-Shakti is a unity of being and non-being— a static dynamic reality. The upshot of the argument is that all heterodox sects, Buddhism, Jainism and Lingayatism admit the existence and reality of the world. Hence they revolutionised the philosophic thought of the country, revolted against the regressive orthodoxy of Brahmanism and democratised the social structure of India by opening the flood-gates of freedom to the oppressed ignorant masses. By its philosophic revolution Buddhism socialised the masses, attracted foreign scholars from Japan, China, etc. to study in the Universities of Nalanda and Takshashila. Jainism with its logical weapon fought the ritualism of Brahmanism and spread from Kalinga into the Dravidian south— Andhra, Chola, Pandya and Karnatak. When Buddhism and Jainism decayed and degenerated, Lingayatism with its revolutionary banner of Shiva-Shakti revolted not only against decaying Buddhism and Jainism but also against orthodox Brahminism. It spread far and wide into the Andhra, Tamilnadu, and Maharashtra—the whole of Deccan. Scholars from Kashmir, Bengal, Andhra, Orissa, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra came to

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†An Outline of the History of scientific thought: M. N. Roy

Kalyan, the head-quarters of the Lingayats,<sup>7</sup> and participated in the religious academy of Anubhava Mantap. That is the revolutionary role of Lingayatism in Indian history. Thus Lord Basava sums up the essence of Lingayatism:

*Being unable to know the Linga (the Universal soul)  
the Veda*

*Shuddered and called it unknowable;*

*Without realising the Linga the Shastra declares  
It to be unrealizable.*

*The Logic became mute expressing its inability  
to comprehend the Linga, nor could Agama  
understand it. Men cannot make out the greatness  
of Sharanas. A Sharana knows the criterion of  
Our Lord Kudala Sangama.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### ETHICS OF LINGAYATISM

*Are there great men who profess 'I am superior,  
you are superior'?*

*What was the result of their superiority?*

*He who is free from complexes of superiority,  
and inferiority,*

*Is alone a Sharana, O Guheshwara.*

—Allama Prabhu

Allama Prabhu, the President of the Anubhava Mantap, sums up the ethical ideal of Lingayatism in the above vachana. The ethical good of a Sharana does not lie in the superiority of superiors, nor in the inferiority of inferiors, but in the equality of common people. The Lingayat ideal is the equalization of the high and the low without the elimination of individuality. It is the golden mean of the Aristotelian ethics:

“Every act accomplishes something as its work; but a work is imperfect either in defect or in excess. The act itself, therefore, will be similarly imperfect either by defect or excess; nor will an act be perfect, unless it attains to a right proportion, to the due middle between too much and too little. Virtue in general, then, may be defined as observation of the due mean in action, not the arithmetical mean, the mean in itself, but the mean for us ...

“Neither virtue nor happiness, according to Aristotle, can be attained by the individual himself. Moral development and moral activity, as well as the procuring of the necessary external means, are conditioned by a regulated life in common, within which the individual obtains education in the good, the protection of the law, the assistance of others and opportunity for the practice of virtue. Even by nature man is born for a life in common; he is a political animal; life for him is only possible with his fellows. The state, then, is higher than the individual, higher than the family; individuals are only accidental parts of the political whole. Aristotle at the same time is far from entertaining the abstract conception of this relation which belongs to Plato; the latter’s politics, rather, he expressly opposes. With him also the business of the state is to rear its citizens into good men, to raise human life into its perfection; but without prejudice to the natural rights of the individual and the family, of the thine and the mine, of personal liberty. The state, he says, is not a unity, but essentially a plurality of individuals and smaller communities; this it has to recognise and it has to effect also by law and constitution that virtue, humanity, shall become as universal as possible, as well as that political power shall remain in the hands of the virtuous citizens. Of the various political forms, Aristotle gives the preference to constitutional monarchy and aristocracy, i. e. to the state in which not riches and not number of heads rule, but all such

citizens as are possessed of competent property, as have been educated in all moral integrity and as are capable of protecting and administering the whole. That state is the best in which the virtue, whether of one or of many, governs."†

The moral government of Aristotle finds a parallel in the Lingayat Kalyan State instituted in the religious Parliament called Anubhava Mantap. The basis of the Lingayat State was ethical. The socio-political state was based on broad moral principles. In fact a moral ideal was not only the background of the Lingayat religion but also the backbone of its socio-economics and politics. But in contrast to Aristotle's aristocratic state, Basava founded a social-democratic state. The Anubhava Mantap was itself such a one. Though moral good was the basis of both states, virtue will be practised more freely in a democratic state than in an aristocratic one. The concept of Aristotle's state would be dictatorial and authoritarian, while that of Basava's was democratic and social. Basava, though a minister to the king, was not afraid of him. "May I fear that Bijjala as I fear you, O Lord Kudalasangama." Consequently Basava's revolutionary state began to shake the foundation of Bijjala's government. Bijjala's monarchy received a rude shock. Finally Basava had to revolt against Bijjala's rule. That is the ideological background of the revolt of the Lingayat leader Basava against the Jain king Bijjala. Decadent Jainism could not tolerate the rising tide of the

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† History of Philosophy : Dr. Albert Schweigler,



reforming Lingayat Movement. In political terminology, it was a struggle between monarchy and democracy.

The moral philosophy of Lingayatism is based on Monotheism which was a progressive force in those days. Monotheism was set up through the combination of rationalism and empiricism. The polytheism of the Vedas and Agamas was examined at the bar of reason (vichar) and experience (Anubhava) and was found reactionary. What was established through reason (vichar) was put to a test by experience (anubhava). In other words intellectual conviction was verified by experience. Hence a Sharana observes:

Can fire hidden in wood enkindle itself?  
Can the spark of fire latent in a stone, know  
its brightness? In the same way, false devotion and renunciation of a hypocrite cannot be believed in, without verifying them. One should not come to a conclusion without examining through direct experience (pratyaksha pramana) what is truth and falsehood. The devotion and renunciation of one who does not examine the concepts of Guru, Linga, Jangam etc. is blind, not genuine ..... So one should practise virtue or do any work by becoming pure in thought and feeling. This is the happiness that a Sharana derives from the company of Lord Bhogabankeshwar,

How is the purity of head and heart brought about? The Lingayat Saints combined in themselves both the qualities of preaching and practising their principles. Basava summarises all moral principles in the following:

Steal not, kill not, speak not untruth, be not angry, insult not others. This is the way of keeping your character and conduct pure and is the only way of winning the favour of God.

“Non-thieving— to restrain from thieving others’ property, is a great virtue.” Lingayat Saints were not content with this statement. They went further and said that to earn more than what they required for their subsistence was theft. Saint Maraya used to maintain himself by picking up rice grains in the street every day. One day when he had brought home more rice than was required, his wife rebuked him and caused him to throw away the excess rice in the street. To keep the excess rice was as good as depriving others of food. All these saints followed some particular profession or other to maintain themselves. The idea of self-help and self-reliance was felt by them as of great value. To rely on others for their livelihood was considered by them as a great sin. They did not even stoop to touch others’ silver and gold. Basava says,

O God! I swear by your name that I won’t touch a gold ornament or cloth lying

in the street, for that is your command to me. If I fail in this duty and desire others' self, O God ! throw me into the everlasting hell and depart from me.

"To help others in their difficulties or distress is charity. Christianity exhorts us to regard our neighbours as ourselves but does not state the cause thereof. Lingayatism says that we regard our enemies and neighbours as ourselves because the souls of all are one and the same. Even the birds and beasts assemble at a distressing call of any one of their group. Basava exemplifies this social virtue in his saying:—

Does not the crow call all its group at seeing a morsel of food ? Does not the cock make a call for its kith and kin at seeing a few grains ? A devotee of Shiva, who has no such feeling, is worse than cocks and crows.

"Further, not to cause pain to others either by evil motive or by words or by action is defined as harmlessness (Ahimsa). Saint Akhandeswar says: 'When wise men speak to us, we should humbly reply to them. God departs from the place wherein hard words are exchanged just as fire arises when two stones meet with force.' This saying lays emphasis on humility as a precious virtue. Purity of words and actions presupposes a pure mind. Basava says: 'How can God trust a man whose inner self is not

pure ?' Basava has condemned animal sacrifice and has expressed pity for the animal thus : ' O Goat ! weep for your fate.' He again says :

A fisherman takes enjoyment in catching fish and killing them. Why does he not take pity on them as he does for the death of his own child ? Is not that man worse than a butcher, who, being a devotee of Shiva, yet slaughters living beings ?

Basava has laid down a precept that 'compassion towards all living beings is the foundation of all religions.'\*

Truth and non-violence were the ideals of the Lingayat movement. But Basava gave them a practical interpretation. To achieve social and moral good non-violence and truth become means. We should achieve good through non-violent and truthful means. The moral and the social good in those days could be achieved by freeing society from the Brahmanic hegemony. In fighting the old order of Brahmanism, Basava had to refute its Vedic theology and sociology. It may be argued that Basava and his followers had to use harsh words against the Brahmin domination. Was there not violence in their words and arguments ? Besides, the movement of Basava was itself a revolt against the system of Brahmanism. Does not revolt involve violence ? Of course it does. But Basava as a true revolutionary reformer held the practi-

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\* The Journal of the Literary Committee, Dharwar, Vol. I, No. IV.

cal view that violence or non-violence is a means to the social good. When non-violent means of achieving the good are exhausted, then violent methods should be resorted to. Basava did not dogmatise about non-violence like Mahatma Gandhi. Basava saw a lot of slaughter and violence in the then existing society. He discovered the root cause of violence in the Brahmanic hierarchy. So he fought against the Brahmin class domination. That class domination was responsible for social tyranny and animal slaughter. Hence he did not mind using harsh and violent expressions while refuting the Brahmin theology. No man can be non-violent and true in word, thought, feeling, expression and action literally. Basava did not keep non-violence and truth as dogmatic ideals but held them to be the means in the practical sense. Hence he opines:

It is said that Brahma is the creator and Vishnu, the protector. Why could Brahma not create his head ? Why was Vishnu unable to protect his own son ? Our Lord Kudala Sangama is the punisher of the wicked and the protector of the virtuous.

That is the practical attitude of Basava towards violence and non-violence. Further to bring about social and moral good, he had to fight social ills. He had to resort to social means like organisation and mobilization of the masses. So he set up the religious parliament, Anubhava Mantapa. We may sum up Basava's ethics

of non-violence thus: He was neither an advocate of non-violence out and out, nor an apostle of violence, but a dialectician and parliamentarian. Was he not premier to the King Bijjala?

If ethics is the basis of politics in Lingayatism, metaphysics is the background of its moral philosophy. The Lingayat metaphysics is known as Satsthala Sastra. That is, self-realization is achieved through six stages i. e. Satsthalas. A devotee has to pass through these stages to attain the summum bonum. The stages are Bhakta, Mahesha, Prasadi, Pranalingi, Sharana and Aikya. A devotee performs different functions in different stages.

(1) BHAKTA STHALA— Fervent devotion is a mark of a devotee in this stage. The disciple should always follow a pure and proper profession sincerely and offer his earnings to Guru-Linga-Jangama (preceptor, self and universal self). This is the main function of this stage. This will lead to the development of mind, and the enrichment of experience (anubhava). Virtues like affection and tolerance will develop in the devotee. The Sharanas have described the conduct of a disciple in their sayings. A Sharana holds:

One who is well-versed in the Gita is not wise; one who knows the importance of speech is not wise. But he is wise who has pinned his faith on Linga (the self) and he is also wise who offers his services to Jangama (human beings and other dumb creatures).

Believing in himself a man should serve the animal creation.

O you comrades who look into the looking glass, look at the Jangama, the universal mirror. In it is hidden Linga, the individual self. It is the saying of Kudalasangama that Linga and Jangama are identical.

Having realised the importance of the dictum that 'a hand which has touched the Linga is pure and the body that has worn the Linga is a temple', a devotee should undertake social service. He should not stoop to vices even in his mind but should take to practise virtues. He should not think of caste, creed, and colour among his colleagues who have chosen various vocations in life. Inter-caste marriage and dinners should be unhesitatingly resorted to. Internal cliques and factions are prohibited. This is the noble conduct of a Bhakta.

(2) MAHESHA STHALA— Firm devotion towards Guru-Linga-Jangama is Nistha; The Mahesha does not look lustfully at women. He does not touch other's property. He does not rely upon others' luck. He should not go on a pilgrimage. He cannot tolerate the censure at Guru-Linga-Jangama. He has no belief in Astrology, palmistry etc. He hates prostitution. He cannot bear the slaughter of goats in the sacrifice. He serves society through teaching, preaching and writing. This practice is Gurulinga. This is the sign of Mahesha. Thus a Sharana sums up the mission of Mahesha:

I begin working for the worship of the Guru. I undertake business for the worship of Linga and I will serve others for the social service of the universal creation (Jangama).

(3) PRASADI STHALA—One should cultivate balanced devotion. By balance of mind the mind is rendered pure. Prasada means the acceptance of the balanced devotion. The remnant of the offering done to Guru-Linga-Jangama is prasada. If touch, smell etc. are purified, then the mind will automatically become pure. By eating the offering a devotee attains spiritual knowledge. He will easily pass the moral test. A prasadi is always cheerful. He is sweet-tongued, generous and modest. His senses are rendered pure by Prasada. In short, his daily routine is purified by Prasada.

(4) PRANALINGI STHALA—One who attains the the Jangam-Linga status through experienced devotion is a Pranalingin. A Pranalingin should practise experienced devotion. In the previous stages the trainee's mind was absorbed in external affairs. But in the Pranalingi stage, it is interested in internal matters. The trainee will see the Pranalinga seated in his heart through inner vision. By concentrating on the Pranalinga, a Pranalingin comes to acquire qualities of peace, prudence, truth, non-violence, self-abnegation, concentration and universal brotherhood. By practising *Prananasandhana* he will realise Godhood in the lives of all creatures.



(5) SHARANA STHALA—A Sharana regards himself as a wife to the Linga and attains blissful devotion in the Lings. He will realise God very near to himself. He will remain aloof from the snares of wordly existence. The greatness of a Sharana is made manifest in the following vachana of Basava:

If a tank, a brook and a well were rendered dry, then moss shell and conch will appear, but when the ocean goes dry, then gems and jewels we can see. If the saints of Kundalasangama speak out with open minds, then we can see the Linga.

Saints and Sharanas will get knowledge and experience of God and the world, and regard the service of the whole creation as the best ideal allotted to them. The ideal of a Sharana is the uplift of the oppressed masses. What he practises becomes a guiding virtue.

(6) AIKYA STHALA—The Sharana in this last stage becomes one with Shiva. The individual soul Linga, merges itself in the Universal soul. Jangama, i. e. the Microcosm realizes itself in the Macrocosm. The trainee becomes a trained graduate of the Satsthala philosophy. He feels the omnipresence of God. God Pervades the whole universe. This Aikya is God—merciful to his creation. ‘I saw the inner soul outside and I saw the outer soul in me. The unification of the inner and the outer is like void (bayalu) merging in to void’. The clam

peaceful strength and joy is brought down into the vital and physical bodies. When this is established there is no longer the turmoil of the vital forces. This peace, the silent peace and joy, is our first descent of the Divine power into the *Adhara* i. e. the *Acharalinga* is to be made dynamic. That is the summum bonum of the Lingayat metaphysics and ethics. Thus thrills the heart of Basava:

*Look! He has scattered the clouds of all  
darkness. Kudalasangayya alone apprehends  
the effulgence of the unison—the shining throne  
of the morning light.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LINGAYAT SOCIAL REVOLUTION

*A Brahmin is not born to read the Veda and the  
Shastra;  
A Kshatriya is not meant to kill and be merry,  
Trading is not the monopoly of a Vaishya;  
Our god Kama Bhima does not consent without  
Examining the merits and demerits of a farmer.*

— *Sharana*

One of the many reform movements aimed against the supremacy of the Brahmins whose selfish exploitation of the lower classes led to the rise of new sects, essentially anti-Brahmanic in origin, is the Lingayat Movement. It rose in revolt against reactionary Brahmanism which was the dominating feature of Hinduism. The insistence upon the socio-religious cult of Varnashramadharma by Hinduism led to the domination of Brahmins in society which resulted in the exploitation of lower castes and classes. The age-long slavery of the Indian people can be traced to that source. Brahmanism as a socio-economic force exploited not only the untouchables but touchables like the Kshatriyas as well. For Brahmins, in days of yore, were an effective power behind the kingly throne of the Kshatriyas. It was usually the Brahmin priest or Brahmin minister who shaped the policy and administration of kings. In fact they were not only admini-

strators but law-makers also. The spiritual verdict of a family Brahmin priest on any political or social matter was willy-nilly taken as a divine decree by Kshatriya kings.

The kernel of Hinduism was Brahmanism. Brahmin preceptors were the custodians of divine knowledge. They claimed to be a superior race to others in society. They were supermen keeping the under-dogs in ignorance and illiteracy. Sanskrit was a preserve of the Brahmin priesthood. Books on religion, law and administration were written only in Sanskrit, outcastes like peasants, workers, and coolies were deliberately exploited not only intellectually but socially and economically also. In ancient India society was religion-ridden. Any problem, social, economic or political, was judged in the light of religious books such as the Vedas, Upanishads and Smritis. But the rabble was deprived of the right of religion and religious books.

What was the status of a mother in Hinduism? She was classed among the untouchables as she was a source of sin. She was on a par with a chattel. She had no right, of religious worship. Since she was without religious rights she had no position in society, not to speak of her economic rights. The upshot of the argument is that the superiority of the priesthood was established over the inferior populace.

In the Hindu religion Vedic rituals and sacrifices were the order of the day. It was dominated by a

plurality of gods. Any object like a stone, or a plant was regarded as a small deity and worshipped. The reactionary Vedic religion was revived after the fall of Buddhism and the rise of Brahmanism. Shankaracharya, a theologian of the time, reestablished the supremacy of the Vedic cult and the Upanishadic religion.

It was against this reactionary religious society of Hinduism that Buddhism, Jainism and Lingayatism rose. Like Buddhism, the Lingayat movement exposed the dangerous tendencies of Hinduism. As against the crude polytheism of Hinduism it set up a progressive refined monotheism. If the Agamic religion had improved upon the sacrificial religion of the Vedas by substituting image worship in the temples, Lingayatism superseded both by its particular *Ishta Linga* worship and proclaimed its firm commandment under the polytheistic sky that God is one and should be worshipped in one form alone.

Secondly the Lingayat movement exposed and tabooed the violence of the sacrificial rites of the Vedic religion in which innocent animals were slaughtered. Basava's heart, like Buddha's bled for the animals killed in sacrifice and strongly condemned the killing of animals on a religious pretext. As the prophet puts it: a religion is no religion that does not teach non-violence, kindness and compassion. Both animals and men are entitled to live happily on earth. As Prof. Sakhare pertinently remarks:

“The Lingayat religion has entirely discarded the Karmanas and Yajnas of the Vedas and Smritis and

has repudiated the Vedic *Varnashramadharma*; it has established the universal brotherhood of man in religion; it is permeated with the doctrine of Ahimsa ( non-injury ) and with all-embracing kindness. it may be noted by and by that the religion having parted company totally with the *Varnashramadharma* and the doctrine connected with it, claims to be altogether different from Hinduism, the religion of *Varnashramadharma*" \*

The distinction of high and low is the core of the Varnashramadharma. This reactionary social doctrine is responsible for the separation of countless castes and sects. The result has been that the Hindu community is full of warring and jarring elements that refuse unity and solidarity. This has also enabled cunning and selfish sections of the community to trade upon the ignorance of the masses, kept ignorant as a matter of principle.

But the leader of the Lingayat movement, Basava, was up against these social iniquities and the domination of an intellectual aristocracy. Though a minister to the Jain king, Bijjala, he associated with the common people of all classes and formed a refined society inviting into his fold recruits from all the lower castes. He grouped people from all grades and professions, manual as well as mental, and initiated them into the revolutionary fold of Lingayatism. As Prof Sakhare clearly points out:

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\*The History and Philosophy of the Lingayat Religion: Prof. Sakhare

“That band of saints ... had in it men and women of various ranks and professions. The prophet and Leader Basava was the minister of a kingdom; Gundayya was a potter; Appayya was a barber; Haralayya was a shoemaker; Kakkayya was a tanner; Ketayya was a basket-maker; Chaudayya was a ferry-man; Madival was a washerman. There were, besides, traders, agriculturists, .. It thus proved that ‘Kayak’ (duty), ‘the well planned life, was quite practical and nothing was impossible.’”

Basava became a radical reformer and a practical revolutionary by diagnosing and combatting the evils of Hindu Vedic society. In his religious way he radicalised the stagnant and ignorant society. He effected a number of radical reforms.

“According to Basava’s teachings, all are equal by birth; men are not superior to women who should have equal status with men and the fair sex religiously and socially must be treated with all respect and delicacy; marriage in childhood is wrong and the contracting parties are to be allowed a voice in the matter of their union; and widows are to be allowed to remarry. All the iron fetters of social tyranny are, in fact, torn asunder and the Lingayat is to be allowed the freedom of individual action. Even the lowest castes are to be raised to the level of all others by the investiture of Linga and all wearers of the divine symbol are equal socially and religiously in all respects .... The Lingayats do not believe in the theory of Karma which forms one of

the essential features of Hinduism. They worship the Linga, the visible symbol of the Highest Deity alone worn on the body. The other deities established in temples, according to strict Lingayatism, are not to be worshipped. They believe that they can be liberated from the entanglements of the world in this very life. But the everyday life of a Lingayat must be very pure and clean. They are strict vegetarians. Basava emphasised the dignity of labour and the spirit of service and sacrifice.†

The movement laid stress upon family life, which in its opinion was in no way a disqualification for salvation, as opposed to Buddhism and Jainism, otherwise most liberal religions, which closed their doors of salvation against the house-holder unless he abandoned his family and became a member of the Sangha. Most of the Virashaiva saints are living examples of these principles, and even Basava was no exception.

The status of the woman in Lingayat society was equal to with that of the man. Lingayatism exploded sexual inequality in matters religious, social and others. A host of woman-writers like Sister Mahadevi and Neelambike participated in the deliberations and disputations on religious and social matters at Kalyan, the capital of the Lingayat community. Basava founded a religious parliament called *Anubhava Mantap* at Kalyan. The

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† "Shri Basaveshwar" by Dr. Nandimath: from the Journal of the Literary Committee Vol.1. No.1



saints of the community, male and female, far and near from came to Kalyan to hold debates and discussions on problems of life, religion and philosophy. It is recorded that saints, hearing the fame of the religious parliament, came to Kalyan from Kashmir in the extreme north, from Mysore in the south and from Andhra in the northeast. Allama Prabhu was the president of the parliament who conducted the meetings of the conference. The thought-provoking dialogue between Allama Prabhu and the woman saint, Sister Mahadevi established beyond contention the equality of the sexes in religion and society. Sister Mahadevi with her ingenious appealing logic convinced Allama Prabhu of the status of women and their just claims in society and in every walk of life.

'This exceptional attitude of parliamentary institution towards the gentle sex changed the destiny of Indian womanhood, as opposed to Brahmanism and Jainism in which the one denied the right of salvation and the other the right of studying the scriptures except Puranas, to the fair sex. It produced lady saints and savants like Sister Mahadevi, Satyakka and Neelalochana, who became the authoresses of many Vachanas and whose writings some times far surpassed those of men saints. Such representative sisters were afterwards called 'The gentle-sex saints of Virashaivism' and they may be numbered about 60'. So the woman who was regarded as an untouchable and outcaste by Hinduism was given her equal position and rank by Lingayatism. Hence the Lingayat movement revolutionised the orthodox and reactionary

Hindu society lifting it from the hell of inequality and class-power to the heaven of equality and democracy. Basava democratised the then existing society by stripping it of its inner contradictions.

“Being excluded from the sixteen sacramental rites the Sudras came to be reduced to the status of serfs to serve the higher three castes. Another most notable thing is that women also even of the first three castes are considered equal to Sudras in status and therefore excluded from the privileges of the rites. They are assigned the duties of domestic affairs and of serving their husbands to attain Mukti. They are thus considered to be merely an object of pleasure and as the means of race propagation only. This also is an equally iniquitous thing -- The *Varashramadharma* based on birth as it has since come to be, has been an iniquitous institution in spite of its champions and defenders. The Lingayat religion has done away it, and ushered in a new chapter of socio-religious life. The abolition of *Varnashrama-dharma* from the new socio-religious system is to be found in all Lingayat religious books. The status of Lingayats as a high-class community of *ATIVARNASHRAMIS* (those above the *Varnashrama-dharma*) is specially discussed in *Veerashaiotkarsha Pradeepika* and *Veershaivanand Chandrika*.†”

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†The History and philosophy of the Lingayat Religion: Prof. Sakhare

‘The abolition of sex and caste distinctions:—The female sex and the members of the lowest strata of society are given full and equal status with the members of the higher classes, socially and religiously. In Vaidika Hinduism. Sudras and females are unfit to perform the rites. Even among the twice-born (Dvijas), there is inequality based on gradation. One born as a Vaishya should remain throughout his life as a Vaishya. In the case of females, the first samskara begins with the marriage ceremony; but the unlucky Sudra has no right whatsoever. He is always kept in his own circle with a strong hand. An attempt on his part to rise above it even by means of highly praised practices, such as penances etc., is not tolerated by the Brahmins and meets with severe punishment as is clear in the case of Shambhuka, killed by the most virtuous Rama. Everything depends on the right of being born in a particular community in which he is strictly enclosed. Death alone can liberate him from that enclosure. We see the tendency to remove this barrier in the Upanishads and Buddhism, yet it seems that no material progress was achieved in this laudable attempt during those days ..... The Virashaivas firmly believe in the purity of mankind which will never be polluted as long as the Linga is worn on the body. The Linga is believed to be a fire which burns all impurities... Since Virashaivas wear the Linga at all times on their bodies, they believe that they are immune from pollution. Its puritan fervour is duly marked; so is its essentially democratic spirit. Caste

and sex differentiations are obliterated and thus spiritual progress is not hindered in the least by accidents of caste or sex . . . . . Religious life is not necessarily to be divorced from the commitments of family and society; to labour and to serve is also an aspect of religious life; and in fact, the business of life and the spiritual endeavour are harmonised into the pilgrim's progress towards realization. Democratic in spirit, puritanic in fervour, with service for its watch-word and the Satsthala for its sign-posts, Veerashaivism firmly blends together man's spiritual and social lives and thus teaches the art of right living."\*

Finally no less popular an Indian philosopher than Sir S. Radhakrishnan brings out the outstanding feature of the Lingayat movement:

"Though Manikkavasagar did not develop a defiant attitude towards the caste rules the later Shaivas, Pattanathu Pillai, Kapilar and the Telugu poet Vemana are critical of the caste restrictions. Tirumalar held that there was only one caste, even as there was only one God. The reform movement of Basava (middle of the twelfth century) is marked by its revolt against the supremacy of the Brahmin, though Basava himself was a Brahmin. This sect does not accept the hypothesis of rebirth"†

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\*A Hand-book of Veerashaivism: Dr. S. C. Nandanath

†Indian Philosophy Vol II: Radhakrishnan

The secret of the Lingayat movement lies in the fact that theology and sociology proceed *pari passu*; in fact both are intertwined. The Lingayat sociology is shaped in the monotheistic mould. Social development was possible through religion. The religious development resulted in social progress. Religion was a lever for progress in those days. The removal of age-long untouchability was brought about through the abolition of the temple-idol worship which was vitiated by the Brahmin priestcraft. Instead of allowing the untouchables to enter the Brahmin-controlled temples, as Gandhiji does now, Basava abolished the temple institutions; because those institutions had become reactionary religiously, socially and economically. That is the significance of the Lingayat Social revolution. Basava ranks first among Indian social reformers in having achieved social revolution through religion:

*Those who are wellversed in the Veda,  
Shrastra, Purana, Agama etc. are not great.  
A rope-dancer is a master of sixty four lores.  
Is he then inferior? This is not the right  
criterion. It is quite different. All these are  
bread earning lores; therefore he is great who  
has realized virtue, knowledge, religion,  
conduct and purity, my dear Lord Uralinga-  
peddi-Vishweshwara.*

— Uralingapeddi

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIO-ECONOMICS OF LINGAYATISM

*Don't make me a beggar-maid to beg at the  
doors of others. Let the boon offered fall to  
the ground; and before I lift it, let a dog  
take it, O Mallikarjuna!*

— Akka Mahadevi

. Monotheism represents the striving for the establishment of a centralised society on the ruins of the antique order of warring city states or inflated empires—conglomerations of heterogeneous people held together by brute force. As such it attacks all the ceremonies, customs, traditions, institutions and habits established by the earlier form of religion. Barbarous prejudices descending from the days of fetichism are replaced by the dogmas of theology. The poetic idolatry of polytheistic superstition gives way to the blind faith in a supreme being or the mystic notion of an inexplicable first principle.

“But dogmatic theology, futile speculations about the nature of the unknown and unknowable final cause, and the vain efforts for the realisation of the unrealizable—all these start as much from preconceived notion and superstitious beliefs as the fearful worship of fetichism or the devout ceremonies of natural religion. Monotheistic religions free human mind from the bondage of grosser superstition; while

encumbering it with more subtle forms of the same virtue or vice which, nevertheless, are not altogether incompatible with social progress. Indeed, under certain conditions of history, monotheistic religion is the ideology of the forces of social revolution. The monotheism of Jesus Christ and later on of Mohammed laid down the foundation of modern European culture." \*

The bold lead taken by Basava in combatting the polytheistic forces of Vedicism resulted in the monotheism of the Lingayat movement. Basava's monotheism dethroned the Vedic deities, stripping them of their pelp and power. The Vedic natural religion, ascribing divinity to each and every object and deifying objects in nature, was replaced by a rigorous monotheism. Thus observes Basava:

A stone deity is not God; an earthen deity is not God. A tree is not God. An idol made of metal is not God. Deities in holy places like Setubandh, Rameshwar, Gokarn, Kashi, Kedar and others are not God. He is himself God who knows what he is, Lord Kudalsangama.

God is one; designations are many. A chaste wife has one husband. If she desires another she will suffer. By what name shall I address them who advocate the vulgar doctrine of polytheism, Lord Kudalsangama.?

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\* Heresies of the Twentieth Century: M. N. Roy,

The Lingayat movement found that the masses were being exploited not only intellectually and religiously but economically also by the Brahmin priests who were dealers in spiritual knowledge. They played the role of brokers between the Gods in temples and the people at large. The Brahmin priesthood was the pivot of exploitation. That class dominated the masses. Basava fought the priestly class by abolishing idol-worship and temple institutes which came in the way of people's progress. He cast away the relics of Vedic ritualism because of the daily slaughter of goats and sheep at the altars. The Lingayat movement fought against asceticism and penance. Blind beliefs and superstitious customs and practices were put a stop to. The movement exposed the hypocritical tendencies of the Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras, Puranas and Smritis. The so called Aryan culture was cross-examined, ex-rayed and 'was found reactionary:

What is the use of listening to Shastras and Puranas; Of what use is it to us if we read the Veda and Vedanta?

May I admit the greatness of the Shastra? It enforces Karma. May I regard the Veda as important? It advises slaughter of animals.

The Adipurana tells only of Asuras; the Veda Purana resorts to the slaughter of goats. Ramayana speaks only of demons (Rakshasas); the Mahabharata relates family feuds. All these Puranas preach Karma first; but your Purana is matchless, O Lord Kudalasangama.



The Sharanas did not pin their faith in Astrology; "Do not discriminate between today and tomorrow. Time is common to a Shiva Sharana; it is the same to Hara Sharana; so is the case with one who meditates upon Lord Kudalasangama." The unreality of a dream and its origin and the means of its removal are well pointed out by a Sharana in the following:

Doubt in a man's mind becomes a bugbear in a dream and troubles him. But if our mind is purged of its doubting, then disturbance in a dream will automatically disappear, O Mahalinga Guru Shiva-shiddeva Prabhu !

This Vachana expounds the mental conflict of the modern psychological theory of psycho-analysis.

Modern Psychology insists that instincts should not be suppressed. They should be sublimated. Repression of the instinct of sex results in much harm to the individual. So Sexology suggests us to exploit sex for social and moral good. Hence Basava opines:

If we repress passions, much harm will accrue. All passions will torture with a double force. Did the couple Shiriyala and Chengale forshake family felicity ? Did Shindhu-Ballala renounce the sexual pleasures ? If I hanker after another's wife I will be at arm's length from you, Lord Kudalasangama.

Further the Lingayat movement destroyed the caste-system of those days and overturned the structure of Brahmanism by uplifting the lowly untouchables. Numerous vachanas are in evidence of this:—

The waves of the ocean dance and exist in the ocean itself. Waves are not different from water. Similarly the world which is created by you exists in you and disappears in you. Is there any caste or creed ascribed to this world? This God-enveloped world develops in God and disappears in Him only. How can there be caste distinctions? There is no caste, creed or colour; this is the magnanimous doctrine of Channarama of Chimmaligi.

I am not a Brahmin who suffers by regarding gold, woman and land as a network of Karma. But I feel jolly by gloriously greeting the devotees coming to me. I feel happy by warmly welcoming the Sharanas. This I can do, because Lord Kudalasangama has rendered me pure by convincing me to do away with the Brahmanic Karma.

Why do you hate a low-caste when you are born of a woman's dirty (untouchable) womb? How can a man be a lowcaste if he takes home a dead animal? You take a goat and kill it in the temple. The Shastra resorts

to goat killing. But the Sharanas of our Lord Sangama are bereft of all Karma.

Are there in this world people who boast 'I am superior' and 'He is superior'? What was the result of their superiority? We know it. But he who levels down the superiority and the inferiority, the high and the low, is alone a Sharana, Guheshvara.

The Lingayat movement strongly condemned the other-worldliness of both Brahmanism and Shaivism. In the opinion of a Sharana, religion is not heavenly and etherial but humanly and earthly. What are Heaven and Hell? These are found in this world and life. Good character is heavenly; worthless conduct is a hell. A Miltonic note is found in the sayings of Sharanas that mind in its own place can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell. "Enjoyment is youth and Suffering is old age" says a Sharana. Another Sharana named Siddharama opines about Kailas;

O Comrades, you quarrel about 'Kailas'. Listen to me: Kailas is nothing but a barren mountain. The ascetics dwelling there are idlers. Chandrashekar i. e. Shankara who lives there is very arrogant. Why describe it vividly? That is Kailas status which one attains when one becomes one with you, Kapilasiddhamallikarjuna, by behaving well and realising the unity of Linga and body.

Karma and its attendant fatalism coupled with the reincarnation of the soul sum up the explanation of this tragic human existence by a Hindu mind. In fact the doctrine of Karma still runs in the veins of Indians. But this is a doctrine of social slavery. People ascribe their sorrow and suffering to Karma or the will of God. Fatalism represents the popular conception of the law of Karma. Mr. Roy exposes the dangerous consequences of the doctrine:

‘According to this doctrine(Karma)every one must enjoy the fruits of good action and be punished for the evil. The causal consequence may not be evident in the same life. The doctrine of reincarnation is the counterpart of the doctrine of Karma. Yet the highest ideal of Indian spiritualism is Nishkam-Karma -- to work un-concerned with the result. How can one be unconcerned with that which must happen to him irrespective of his will? Here is a contradiction between free will and determinism -- Another ideal of Indian spiritualism is to regard this chain of the law of Karma as a vicious circle and to endeavour to find a way out to salvation This ideal is set forth most authoritatively in the Gita:

‘I do not do any work (do not act) for the result. I am neither friend to some, nor foe to others. I have given enough (what is necessary or what is deserved) to every one in my creation. Therefore whoever knows me in this form (character) and working not for the result, tries to be like myself, he becomes free from all bondage.’

“If this scriptural injunction is read together with the doctrine of Karma; either the latter is invalid or an unattainable ideal is placed before the aspirant for spiritual salvation. If the law of Karma is immutable, then one may do good deeds without wishing the result; yet he shall necessarily enjoy the fruits of those deeds. He may go to the Heaven and there is no freedom even in Heaven. Regarded as a determinist law, the doctrine of the Karma renders the ideal of freedom unattainable. Consequently it militates against the higher ideal Nishkama-Karma. But there is some sense in this apparent madness. The two seemingly contradictory ideals supplement each other for forging the chain of social slavery for the masses. The doctrine of Karma teaches every man to be reconciled to his fate... This is not the first time in the history of India that fatalism or religious prejudice on the part of the masses is assuring continued existence of a bankrupt socio-political system. ‘In the Golden Age’ of ancient India the masses also starved and suffered from all sorts of misery. There is plenty of evidence to this effect to be found in the Mahabharat, for instance.

“The doctrines of spiritualist philosophy were expounded by the Rishis of the old with the object of making the masses feel themselves responsible for their misery and thus reconciled to it. \*

Roy is correct in tracing the genesis of the doctrine of Karma to the ancient ascetics. But Basava

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\*Science and Superstition: M. N. Roy.

combatted the onslaught of the then existing Vedic Karma on which the social fabric depended:

Our manners and customs are in harmony with the sayings ( Nudi ) of our Sharanas. Let Smritis be thrown away into the ocean and Srutis go to Vaikuntha; Puranas should be consumed to fire and Agamas should go with the wind. But let our saying ( Nudi ) be seated in the magnanimous heart of our Kapilashiddha Mallikarjuna

It is man's mind ( Atma ) that has created innumerable Vedas , Shastras, Agamas, Puranas, Logic and Tantras, but these have not at all created our mind.

The goad is small  
The massive elephant  
Is yet held in thrall;  
Tiny is the diamond  
and still at its touch  
a mountain scattereth;  
streaks of knowledge,  
faint pins of light  
and clouds of darkness  
They drive away;  
the atomic mind,  
sees all, knows all—  
pierces the shell

of self-forged sloth  
to reach you  
O Lord Kudal Sangama! \*

But Basava's structure of society appears still more wonderful to a modern mind. The leadership of Basava collected all people belonging to different vocations and laid the foundation of the Lingayat society. The basic principle was: work is worship. All must take to any sort of work, mental or manual suited to the temperament of the individual. So beggary was abolished. "People who make much money by ill means without undergoing bodily or mental strain, who exploit the masses by deceiving them, are rich robbers, and parasites on society. The leaders of the community should excommunicate them." So says the Sharana. After freeing the masses from the clutches of the Brahmin priestly class, Basava dissolved the decaying order of Brahmin society, and shaped a democratic society free from exploitation of any colour. The socio-economic principle that a man should live by doing any sort of work to his liking, is the foundation of the Lingayat society. Hence Lingayats approached the people of different callings, particularly the lower castes. The following Sharanas represent different vocations : --

Jedar Dasimayya was a weaver; Shankar Dasimayya was a tailor. Madival Machayya was a washerman. Ketayya was a basket-

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\*Musings of Basava: Profs: Shrinivas Iyengar and Basavanal.

maker. Kinnari Bommayya was a goldsmith. Vakkal Muddayya was a ryot. Godhara Madanna, a soldier; Kannayya an oilman. Sangayya a hunter, Basappa a carpenter, etc.

The whole society was reconstructed taking into account the needs of each individual. • The bread that a Sharana earns by the sweat of his brow is alone conducive to health. That is his real wealth. Wealth given in charity is as worthless as worms. The life story of Ketayya the basket-maker is a proof of the Lingayat socialist principle: Ketayya was a poor man. He lived by basket making. But Shiva in the guise of Lord Basava being moved by his poor condition, went to his house in Katayya's absence. Katayya's wife welcomed Basava. Basava took food and offered money to her. But she flatly refused it as it was not earned by her. But Basava left the gold coins there. When Ketayya came, he scolded his wife for accepting the money. He said "What wretch has thrown away these worms?" "It is Basava" she replied. "Then Basava has become arrogant. He is puffed up with pride." So saying Ketayya threw away the gold coins on to a dung-hill and went to his daily work. Thus prays Akka Mahadevi.

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Don't make me a beggar-maid to beg  
at the doors of others! Let the boon  
offered fall to the ground! And before  
I lift it, let a dog take it, O Mallikarjuna.



## 108 The Lingayat Movement: A Social Revolution

Basava formed people's committees representing various vocations—agriculture, smithy, tailoring, weaving, etc. To crown all he had trained a band of workers to tour and supervise the 'Kayakas' of the people. There was a people's guard called Ganachars. They were entrusted with the work of protecting the community from the enemies of society.

Basava encouraged hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. He enjoined that a man should spin and weave and prepare cloth sufficient for himself as far as possible. The spinning wheel was the only machine available in those days. But he did not encourage the wearing of the bark of a tree, which was the Vedic custom. He is not a revivalist like Mahatma Gandhi. He was a modern man among mediaevals and his movement was progressive. Therefore he preferred khaddar to bark. He did not prescribe and revive the customs and manners, the philosophy and religion of the forest-dwelling Rishis. If Basava were to live to day amidst scientific surroundings, certainly he would find in feudalism and capitalism agencies of exploitation. He would not have gone back to the twelfth century and revived khaddar. He would not go back to the Pauranic days. He would build a society freed from the clutches of exploitation. He would free the oppressed masses from the exploiting classes of capitalism and feudalism.

The band of workers and volunteers of the Lingayat movement used to meet at Kalyan periodically to discuss

the subtleties of religion and philosophy. The institution was named Anubhava Mantap. It was termed Anubhava Mantap because all leaders and learned men examined the various problems at the bar of experience (anubhava). The fame of the institution spread far and wide and it attracted many great men from all parts of the country.

(1) Moligeaya Marayya—He was a king of Kashmir. He renounced his kingdom and came to Kalyan with his wife and became a member of the Academy. His wife Mahadevi became known as a writer. Both took to the vocation of wood-cutting.

(2) Adayya—He was a rich merchant of Gujarat. He came from Dwaraka in Gujarath to Karnatak for trade. He had gone to Pulagir, now called Lexmeshwar in the district of Dharwar. He is also a writer of vachanas.

(3) Akka Mahadevi—She is a well-known writer of vachanas. She came from Mysore. The Jain king, Koushik, was enamoured of her bewitching beauty and wanted to marry her. But She was not won over. She joined the institution. She was a leading saint writer.

(4) Ekant Ramayya—He was a native of Kuntal province. He died in the cause of religion.

(5) Prabhudeva—He belonged to Banawashi in the district of Karwar. He toured all parts of India and joined the Academy. He became the president of the Academy.

(6) Madival Machideva—He came from Hipparige in the Bijapur District. He was a washerman. He became known in the institution.

(7) Shiddharameshwar—He was famous as a builder of temples and digger of tanks. He was a native of Sholapur. Pradhudeva took him to Kalyan and he was made a member of the council.

(8) Sakalesh Madaras—He came from the extreme south, casting away princely pleasures, to Kalyan where he joined the community.

(9) Bontadevi—She was a daughter of another king in Kashmir. Having heard the fame of Anubhava Mantap, she came to Kalyan and participated in the deliberations of the Mantap. She is an authoress of vachanas.

(10) Charamaraya— He was a king of Kerala. He renounced his kingdom and travelled to Kalyan in search of Shiva. He was initiated into the Lingayat religion by a woman saint named Goggavve, the famous authoress of vachanas.

Anumisha was ruling at Pattadakalla (Dt. Bijapur). He also joined the institution, forsaking the kingly pleasures. Similarly, Mallarasha was a king at Aihole in the district of Bijapur. He joined the Lingayat faith.

There were about sixty women members in the religious academy of Shivanubhava Mantap. Thirty of them are writers of vachanas. But the vachanas of the remaining ones are not extant.

It is said that Tukaram was a reformer who brought down to the ground the hoary fabric of the Vedic society and its culture. In Tukaram's society there was no system. He was an emotional mystic. But Basava was more a rationalist than a mystic. In fact he seems to have based his mystic utterances on rationalism. Otherwise, how did Basava organise such a tremendous movement against the weight of Vedic Brahmanism? And how did he achieve it within the short span of a decade? Without a rationalist background, the monotheism of the Lingayats would not have succeeded. The very life of Takuram was an example of indiscipline and irregularity, for which he received threats from his wife. The systematic structure of Basava's society is totally absent in the movement of Tukaram, Ramadas, Kabir, Chaitanya and others. These reformist movements were mystical from top to bottom. Their social background was not stable. No less a historian than the late Sir James Campbell thus gave his verdict on the Lingayat movement:

“It was the distinctive feature of his (Basava's) mission that while illustrious religious and social reformers in India before him had each laid his emphasis on one or other items of religious and social reform, either subordinating more or less other items to it or ignoring them altogether, Basava sketched and boldly tried to work out a large and comprehensive programme of social reform with the elevation and independence of womanhood as its guiding point.

"Neither the social conferences which are annually held in these days in several parts of India nor Indian social reformers can improve upon that programme as to the essentials. The present day social reformer in India is but speaking the language and seeking to enforce the mind of Basava."\*

*A Shiddhantin spent his life in achieving knowledge. The knowledge of a Vedantin was exhausted in argumentation. The knowledge of Kriyavanta ended in empty talk; a merchant used his knowledge in amassing wealth. All these lead to bondage; but it is hard to have knowledge leading to freedom, Kapilasiddha mallikarjuna.*

—Shiddharama

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\*Times of India. 17-4-1918.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LINGAYAT PSYCHOLOGY

Before entering into the details of Veerashaiva psychology it is rather useful to briefly survey the principles of modern psychology in order to find out the similarities in both the systems. According to modern psychology the organism of every animal is composed of numerous life atoms or cells. Every cell which is the simplest particle of a living substance is capable of independent life. Every cell is bathed in the blood and lymph which condition its vital processes. Nervous tissues in the body are constituted by the union of thousands of millions of specially differentiated cells. These different nerves conduct blood circulation. The feeling of pleasure and pain carries the command of the brain to the different organs of the body. The whole nervous system consists of two parts, the peripheral part and the central part. The central part consists of the spinal cord and the brain. The skull contains firstly the hind brain (cerebellum) which keeps the body balanced and secondly the mid brain and thirdly the cerebrum or the frontal brain. The peripheral part of the nervous system is that which connects the central part with other organs of the body, such as muscles, sense organs and glands. Sense organs are essentially constituted by groups of such cells peculiarly responsive to certain kind of stimulus, those of the eye to light, those of the ear to sound etc. The brain is like a central telegraphic system which

initiates or arrests movements of different muscles and sense organs with which it is connected by numerous nerves. If anything like an insect were to fall into the eye efferent nerves carry the news to the brain and the brain sends its command to the eye-lashes to throw it out. The eye-lashes immediately move and drive out the insect or the dust atom. The function of every sense organ is carried on with the help of the brain. If the nerve centre in the brain connected with the eye is destroyed the eye becomes blind and so also with other organs.

Just as modern psychology has made three divisions of the brain in the skull, so also Veerashaivism creates three parts in the brain. It calls the frontal brain by the name of Brahmarandra. It consists of thousand petals or groups of nerves. In this part the Chitkala or the intellectual aspect of God dwells in the form of Jeeva (self). This Jeeva is called Nishkalalinga (formless God). The central part of the brain is called Sikhachakra. This consists of three groups of nerves. In this part Prana or life breath dwells and is named Shoonyalinga (God without name). The hind part of the brain is called Paschimachakra which consists of a single nerve. In this part the self luminous soul dwells and is called Niranjanaalinga (God without attributes). Just below this part the spinal cord joins. Thus we find a curious coincidence between the Veerashaiva and modern psychological descriptions of the brain.

Veerashaiva psychology has proceeded a step further and has analysed the nervous system in the whole

body into six parts, (1) middle of the eye-brows (2) neck (3) heart (4) navel (5) the generating organ and the (6) excreting organ. These are the places where the nerves and each of them perform a particular function. The nerve ending in the middle of the eye-brows is called Ajnachakra. This operates as an efferent nerve in communicating the commands of the brain to different sense organs. The neck contains Vishuddhichakra or nerve wherein lies ether which enables the oesophagus (food carrying valve) to send down the food to the stomach and enables the larynx (sound-valve) to create sound and enables the trachea lying below the larynx to breathe.

In the heart the Anahatachakra is situated wherein lies the airy principle which helps to purify blood coming into the heart from various parts of the body and then to discharge it to various parts. The navel contains Manipurachakra wherein lies the fiery principle which subjects the bowels to contraction and expansion and thus helps to bring about digestion of food. The generating organ contains Swadhisthanachakra wherein lies the principle of earth. The heart, trachea and the brain are important organs and in case they are damaged, life passes away. The sense organs namely Jnanendriyas are five (1) the eye (2) the nose (3) the tongue (4) the ear (5) the skin. The functions of these organs should be sublimated.

The eye can see both the ugly and the beautiful. An aspirant of God endeavours to refrain from an evil look. To accomplish this object he starts with the hypo-



thesis that God exists in each sense organ and whatever is worthy and conducive to moral and spiritual progress should be seen, smelt, tasted, heard and touched. The idea of the existence of Linga in each sense organ prevents the aspirant from becoming a slave to the senses and saves him from doing what is wrong. Thus the devotee is fully imbibed with the idea of Godhood and habituates himself to act like God. He becomes a man-God. Whatever he does, he does it with no desire for the fruit of action. The Isha Upanishad says that the whole world is permeated with God (Siva) and whatever is given by him, we should accept and that we should not covet the wealth of others. This principle forms the nucleus upon which the Veerashaiva psychology has developed its own system. Thus Veerashaivism posits the existence of Sivalinga in the eye, Acharalinga in the nose, Gurulinga in the tongue, Prasadalinga in the ear and Charalinga in the skin. So it sublimates every sense organ by investing it with a Linga. Having pure and sincere mind is the only means of reaching the moral and spiritual heights. Every belief in Veerashaivism is based on psychological background. Saint-Channabasava says, "People say that body should not be divested of Linga. What is the use of body and Linga being together if the mind is not concentrated on Linga?" This saying goes to show that the outward act of wearing Linga on the body is useless if the mind is not absorbed in Linga.

Modern psychology calls life by different names as mind, self or soul. But Veerashaiva psychology regards

mind and reason as the offsprings of the brain and hence born of matter and they derive their power and inspiration from the Jeeva or soul. Even Prana (life-breath) is a material object though subtle and invisible to the naked eye. It is one of the five elements. It sustains the body as long as it receives inspiration from the Jeeva and it stops work as soon as Jeeva leaves the body. Veerashaivism holds that Jeeva is not a material thing but a spiritual entity. It is a spark of God Almighty. It has entered the body on account of its past deeds. It will certainly find its oneness with God when perfection is reached. Though modern psychology admits that the soul is a spiritual entity and nothing in the material world can stand comparison with it, yet it compounds the soul with life, mind and self. According to Veerashaivism the Linga (or God in the body) is a mere witness of the actions of the Jeeva which finds its liberation from the world's entanglement and realises its identity with God. This is the state of the Aikya or the God realised man. In the Dualism (Dwaita) as sponsored by Madhwa Jeevatma is not Paramatma (God); one is the servant and the other is the master. In the Monism (Advaita) as represented by Shankaracharya though the identity of Jeevatma and Paramatma is maintained yet the monism exposes itself to a fallacy by saying that the work is unreal Maya. If this were so how can it account for the existence of the real Jeevatma in an unreal body? The qualified monism (Visisthadvaita) founded by Ramanuja states that Jeevatma can achieve qualities akin to God but does not secure oneness with God. This view ascribes

imperfection to the souls-those Jeevas. The energy qualified monism, the Shaktivisisthadwaita, as propounded by Veerashaivism maintains that Jeevatma is essentially one with Paramatma and that the world is real as it is created and permeated by God. These four schools admit the immortality of the soul but differ as to its final relationship with God.

Veerashaiva psychology finds a parallel in modern psychology in maintaining the theory of interactionism. The protagonists of this theory are Prof. William James and others. According to this theory body and mind act on one another. When I wish to light a lamp I strike a match with my finger. This action takes place not by mere movements of the nerves but essentially by my wish. Under the command of the will the nerves of the brain will move and cause the fingers to contract and then strike the match. Similarly the body acts on the mind. When the body is sick the mind suffers and becomes uneasy. For this reason Veerashaivism enjoins the duty of carrying out good deeds and maintaining purity of action by the body and purity of thought by the mind till the end of life. It prohibits its votaries from speaking falsehood, thinking ill of others, committing fornication, theft and murder.

The six spiritual stages (Shatsthalas) of Veerashaivism are also based on psychic principles. (1) The Devotion stage Bhaktasthala lays down a condition on the devotee of sacrificing his body, mind and wealth for

his spiritual teacher, God and the saints. (2) In Mahesha stage, the devotee does all actions without a desire for their fruits and regards all living beings like his own self. (3) In Prasadi stage, the devotee first offers all things to God and then enjoys them as God's gifts. He ascribes all his actions to God, being prompted by God, and in fact identifies himself with God. (4) In Pranalingi stage the devotee regards Prana (life) as God's energy and considers the concentration of his mind on Pranalinga to be his ideal. In this stage Sivayoga or union with Siva is attained. (5) In Sharana stage, the devoted, regards himself as the wife and God as the husband and takes entire shelter in God. He lives and moves and has his being in God. (6) In Aikya stage, the devotee loses the feeling of his individual existence in having fully merged himself in God's personality. This state is expressed by the simile of camphor being consumed by the fire. The camphor leaves no residue, not even an atom of ashes when burnt by the fire. So these six stages represent the gradual development of mind until the sixth rung of the ladder leads one to the top of the spiritual heights. As the Veerashaiva devotee regards his whole body as being pervaded by Linga (God) and that all his actions as being directed by God, no evil deed can proceed from him and hence he believes that he has no future life.

St. Molige Maraya says:— "Purity of action is a first step to secure purity of mind. If mind is pure Atma is pure. If Atma is pure, one's consciousness is fully saturated with Godliness" St. Sivalenka Manchanna

says — “One should worship the Linga until his Prana is imbibed with Godliness.” These teachings lay emphasis on the mental contemplation of God. Lingayatism (Veerashaivism) discards idol worship. Visiting temples is prohibited. It does not give value to the yogic exercises of Patanjali. To cultivate truth speaking and other virtues is as good as practising yoga. The aim of Veerashaivism is to sublimate the senses and other astral and causal faculties in man by investing with Linga and thus enabling them to dazzle with divine sparks. The spiritual teacher makes the devotee aware of the existence of Chitkala or intelligent aspect of God lying latent in his hind brain and gives it to him in the form of Isthalinga for his worship. This Linga is a means to attain God who is without name and form. God pervades the whole world, even the gross matter which being the creation of God, is subject to Divine laws. Matter is one of the thirty six categories in the Veerashaiva cosmological system. It is one of the ingredients out of which the whole world is created. It is different from Atma.

Sankhya philosophy regards matter as eternal as the soul but Shaktivisisthadvaita makes the eternity of matter dependent on God and subjects it to God's evolutionary process. According to Sankhya matter acts so long as it is in the presence of the Purusha even though the Purusha is inactive and does not inspire matter. If so, how can the Sankhya ascribe activity to a substance which has no initiative or self activity? Veerashaivism provides a content, namely Linga through

the contemplation of which the formless God is realised. Yoga system of Patanjali is lacking in this content. Souls are eternal and they emanate from God just as the rays of the sun spread out at sunrise and again merge in the sun at sunset. Souls are full of divine energy the Shakti. Matter is a creation of God just as the web of the spider is a creation of the spider out of its body. The Veerashaiva thinkers have taken quite a rationalistic point of view in their contribution to psychology and so deserve to be studied in this light.\*

\*Extracts from Mr. Y. G. Yagati's article, Psychology of Veerashaivism, published in the Journal of the Literary Committee. The author is indebted to him.

## CHAPTER XII

### HARASSMENT OF LINGAYAT HERETICS.

*Great Sharanas are not afraid of the people,  
They do not behave as they like;  
They do not act up to the whims of the mob,  
Nor do they obey the dictates of their minds.  
But they are quite free in God Guheshwar.*

—Allama Prabhu.

Sharanas or revolutionaries as they were called, had to face difficulties and dangers while preaching their principles to people. Since their doctrines were new and novel, the Sharanas had to face opposition from the people and the opponent communities. They underwent trials and tribulations while propagating their principles. The path of a Sharana was strewn with thorns. In fact all revolutionaries in the past met with much opposition. While building a new order by condemning the old one, a revolutionary had to undergo many a hardship of all sorts. Sharanas, therefore, did not mind the whims and caprice of the mob while practising their new doctrine. They had to oppose the whole *status quo*-the conservative order, when paving the path to the new order. The conservatives such as the Shaivites, Vaishnavites, Jains and Brahmins opposed tooth and nail the Lingayat Sharanas. But the Sharanas doggedly persisted in their mission and carried and convinced the message of the Lingayat movement throughout the length and breadth of India.

Elesh Ketayya was a staunch Lingayat. He severed his connections with Shaivites. These got wild and burnt Ketayya's sowing seeds. His cattle were driven out. They besieged his house in order to kill him. But Ketayya received them hospitably and preached them the secret of Lingayatism; thereby they became quiet. Gupta Manchanna was formerly a Vaishnava and he was an employee of Bijjala. Later he was attracted to the Lingayat doctrine. Being afraid of his relatives he practised the Lingayat rites secretly.

Shivanubhava or the Lingayat integral experience condemns the caste system. It advocates the equality, liberty and fraternity of human beings, be they Brahmins, or nonBrahmins, touchables or untouchables. It encourages intercaste marriages and interdining. Brahmins became angry at this new doctrine. A Sharana named Kembhavi Bhoganna was formerly a Brahmin. He dined with a Sudra. Brahmins drove him out of the village. Further Guddamma of Navadige was a Sudra woman. No sooner did she enter the street of Brahmins than they whipped her out of the village. A Lingayat lady named Surambe was a disciple of the Lingayat well-known saint Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya. One day she welcomed the Sudras in her house. The Brahmins complained to the King Bijjala against this matter. As a Sharana, Bibbibachayya, acted in the same way, Brahmins obstructed him from entering the village. Premier Basava had to meet with such occasions. He had to pacify matters between Bijjala and Brahmins by his universal out-look.



According to Brahmanism a woman shall have to marry. But Lingayatism did not lay down a hard and fast rule regarding the marriage. It was left to the free will of the individuals male and female. A Lingayat woman Goggavva did not consent to the marriage. When her parents forced her to marry, she left her house and came to Kalyan. Similarly Bontadevi, another Lingayat lady, leaving her native region, came to Kalyan. She remained a virgin throughout her life. Lastly, Akka-Mahadevi, a famous authoress of Vachanas, divorced her Jain husband and became a leading light of the Anubhava Mantap. Another Sharana Uriligadeva by name, a wellknown Vachana writer, lived on the bank of a river in a straw hut. But Brahmins set fire to the hut. A young girl named Kolambi lived with her companion girls in a cottage. All were worshipping God Shiva while playing. But one day a Vaishnava in the village burnt the cottage. (The writer reminds the Congressmen of their similar heinous deeds done to other partymen like Radicals, during the past election to the Provincial Assemblies held in 1946.)

The Jainas also had harassed the Lingayats. Tilakavva was a daughter of Jain parents. She was converted to the Lingayat creed. Contrary to her will her parents married her to a Jain. When she was performing the Lingayat rites, her husband persecuted her. Another woman, Somovva was a Jain. She was convinced of the Lingayat doctrine and joined the faith. But her husband and mother-in-law prohibited her

from worshipping Shiva. She began to worship Shiva in secret. But her husband killed her at last. In the same way Vaijavva was formerly a Jain woman. Quite against her will her parents married her to a Jain. One day, she served food to a Lingayat Jangama. As a consequence her husband whipped, harassed and turned her out of the house. This brief account shows how the Lingayat doctrine influenced the fair sex in those days. While the whole Vedic and Aupanishadic periods could produce two or three woman-writers like Maitrei, is it not a wonder that the Lingayat movement could produce sixty prolific authoresses like Akka Mahadevi and hundreds of lady revolutionaries who opposed the orthodoxy? But to a Lingayat it is not a wonder or miracle; because the Lingayat Movement was based on freedom of thought and expression. The more freedom a philosophy concedes to the individual irrespective of sex, caste, creed, the more progressive does it become. Hence the Lingayat Movement was progressive and prosperous. It awoke the 'dark' portion of humanity i. e. the woman-folk from their agelong slumber and opened the gates of freedom to them.

Further, Hendad Marayya used to serve water to travellers. He was practising the Lingayat principles. But Bijjala, without understanding the way of his practice, got Marayya's hands cut off. Learning that Keshiraja of Permadi was a learned man, the king Bijjala offered him ministership. But hearing the words of Keshiraja's opponents, the king dismissed him. Shiddharama was the headman of a village. But Amugideva

drove him out of the village because he thought Siddharama disobeyed him. One day the officers of the Chola king forced the lady saint Pittavve to carry mud. But she flatly disobeyed them. ( Look at the revolting spirit of a common woman ! ) The officers harassed her to do so. A Lingayat peasant named Muddayya had given the King the due land rent. But the lower officers pressed him to give more rent, which Muddayya like the village Hampden of England opposed boldly.

Lastly the Lingayat Sharanas had to wage battles with Jains and Brahmins. They had to collect troops and fight the opponents.

A Lingayat king named Kohuru Brahmayya was ruling at Kovalli in the district of Bijapur. The Jains first murdered his son. They thought of killing the king himself and attacked his palace. But the king Brahmayya fought with them and routed them. A woman saint named Guddanma was a native of Guddapur ( a village named after her ) in the district of Bijapur. The opponents had removed the Shivalinga from the Bala Brahmesha temple at Alampur near Shrishaila. She formed troops and fought the opponents and got the Linga reinstated in the temple. In the district of Gulaburga a regular war was waged between the Lingayats and the Jains in which the Lingayats were crowned with success. As a result, the Jain temples were converted into Shaiva temples. Ekanta Ramayya of Gulaburga district was a native of Alande. While he was going to Abbalura in

the district of Dharwar, he had to fight with the Jains there. A Sharana named Addayya of Laxmeshvar also had to battle against the Jains. In this way in the Northern Karnatak the Lingayats had to fight for their existence against the Jains and Brahmins.

“Basava's official position coupled with his charity piety and learning made his new creed very popular. Men and women from all parts of the country, including princes and chiefs from remote provinces, flocked to Kalyan and enrolled themselves as adherents of this new faith. The order of priests known as Jangamas was re-organised and extensive conversion to the new faith through them was undertaken. Thus the number of Virashaiva converts, drawn from almost every caste, began to swell day by day.

“Bijjala, being a follower of Jina, naturally enough viewed with suspicion and increasing alarm the rapid growth of the new creed. Scandal mongers were not slow to make capital out of the king's prejudice and assiduously poured poison into his ears against Basava. Bijjala made some attempts to cripple Basava's all-embracing powers and even to put him in prison. But Basava's hypnotic hold on the people and his undoubted prowess and integrity compelled Bijjala, much against his will, to put up with Basava and his action. Meanwhile the gulf between them perceptibly widened day after day. Finally Bijjala was prevailed upon by the enemies of Basava

to make use of his special reserve-powers to annihilate the Virashaiva movement. Circumstances also favoured Bijjala and brought matters to a head. A marriage was about this time solemnized between the daughter of a Brahmin convert, Madhuvayya and the son of an 'untouchable' convert, Haralayya. Orthodoxy fretted and fumed and raved at the 'unholy' alliance. Bijjala thought it an excellent opportunity for taking severe measures against the Virashaiva movement and its chief exponents. Accordingly, the two 'devotees' who had married were ordered to be dragged over the ground at the end of a rope.

"This action of Bijjala's instead of striking terror into the hearts of the Virashaivas, only infuriated them. They lost their normal balance, and now visibly thirsted for revenge. Basava was sorely grieved at the unsavoury turn events were taking and tried to stem the tide of violence on both sides. Was his movement so conscientiously based on the eternal verities of peace and non-violence, to end now in an orgy of un-reason and bloodshed? On the other hand, Bijjala was now completely alienated from him; through the ordinary channels of the King's prerogative, therefore, no solution could be sought. Nor was there any prospect of Basava's own followers listening to his sweet reasonableness; Basava, therefore, realized that his own days were now numbered. Overwhelmed by a sense of failure,

Basava sought refuge in his titular deity, Lord Kudala Sangama, and became one with him.

“Freed from the restraining influence of Basava, two fire-eating Virashaivas, Jagadeva and Bommarasa, killed Bijjala in his palace and proclaimed their deed to the outside world together with the reasons that had prompted them to it; and it is said that Jagadeva also killed himself soon after. Confusion reigned supreme in the town; insurrection and street fights were very common occurrences; and under cover of darkness many prominent Virasaivas left Kalyan. They were pursued some distance by the army of Bijjala’s son, Raya Murari Sovideva; but they succeeded in evading it. We need not follow their fortunes any further.”\*

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\*Musings of Basava: Profs. Shrinivas Iyengar and Basavanal.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PLATO'S IDEAL STATE AND BASAVA'S KALYAN STATE.

Political thought ever since the days of Plato has theorised about the ideal state—a political organisation of society in which the relations between man and man would be governed by justice.

“Throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages, political thought was dominated by abstract notions which served either the harmless purpose of building Utopias or the sinister design of hiding the concrete realities of life. Plato was not quite the utopian that he has been made out by many uncritical historians of political philosophy. Never-the-less his doctrine of the Ideal State rests on a postulate which still holds good. His definition of the notion of justice, which confounded thought throughout the ages, was bitterly criticised by his opponents, particularly the Sophists. But Plato did give a definition of the notion of justice, which set a concrete ideal for politics. Justice is good life; to establish good life, therefore, is the purpose of politics. In other words, an ideal state is that which establishes the good life.”\*

The general character of the Platonic State is the sacrifice, the exclusive abandonment of the universal, to the political element—the reduction of moral to political

\*Problem of Freedom: M. N. Roy.

virtue. The principle of sense shall everywhere be checked and subjugated to that of intelligence. But if this is to be so, then a universal, a political authority must undertake the training of all to virtue, or the conservation of public morals; all subjective self-will, every egotistic end, must disappear in the collective will and end. So powerful is the principle of sense in men, that only by the might of common institutions, only by the suppression of all subjective activities for private interests, only by the disappearance of the individual in the universal, can it be neutralised. Virtue, and consequently true well-being, is possible only by these means. Virtue must be real in the State, only so will it become real in the individual citizen. In a perfect state all should be in common to all—joy and sorrow, even eyes and ears and hands. All men shall have scope only as universal men social beings. For the realization of this perfect unity and universality there must be a disappearance of all individuality and particularity. Private property and domestic life (in place of which a community of goods and women appears,) education and instruction, the choice of profession and other vocations, even all the individual's remaining activities in art and science—all this must be sacrificed to the end of the state, and entrusted to the guidance and control of the presiding authorities. The individual must be contented to claim only that good which belongs to him as a component part of the state. As Prof. Edward Caird sums up the idea:



"Thus the ideal which Plato sets before us is that of a perfectly unified society in which each individual, confining himself strictly to his own function, shall in that function be a pure organ and expression of the general will. Plato has thus risen to the organic idea of the state as a union of men which is based upon the division of labour according to capacity, and in which the citizen is united to the whole by the special office he discharges."\*

The state is for Plato a huge educational establishment, a single family on the great scale. Even lyrical poetry Plato will have practised only under the supervision of judges. Epic and dramatic poetry (nay Homer and Hesiod themselves) shall be banished from the state, the one because it excites and misleads the mind, the other because it propagates debasing representations of the gods. With like rigor the Platonic state proceeds against physical defects; feeble children, or children born imperfect, are to be cast out; the sick are not to be tended and nourished.

The political institutions of the Platonic state are decidedly aristocratic. Grown up in aversion to the extravagances of the Athenian democracy, Plato prefers an unlimited monarchy to all other constitutions, but still only such a one as shall have for its head a consummate ruler, a perfect philosopher. The saying of Plato is familiar, that only when philosophers shall

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\*The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers.

become rulers, shall philosophise fully and truly and shall unite political power and philosophy together, will it be possible to elevate the state to its true purposes. That there should be one ruler, this appears just to him, because there are so few men possessed of political wisdom. In the *Laws* Plato renounces this ideal of a perfect ruler who as a living law shall have power to govern the state according to his own unrestrained authority, and prefers as the best those mixed constitutions which combine in themselves something of monarchy and some thing of democracy.

It is the aristocratic tendency of the Platonic political ideal which gives rise to the sharp distinction of the various classes and the entire exclusion of the third from any share in political life proper. Psychologically Plato in strictness has only a bipartition into the senses and the intellect, into mortal and immortal; politically also he has only a similar division into the government and its subjects. This distinction is proclaimed the necessary condition of every state; but by analogy with the psychological middle term of the heart, there is interposed between the ruling class and the working class, the middle term of the fighting class. We have thus the classes, the rulers corresponding to reason, the warriors corresponding to the heart and the workers corresponding to appetite. To these three classes belong three several functions: to the first the function of legislation; to the second the function of defending the common weal against enemies from without; to the third the function

of providing for the material requirements, for daily wants as in agriculture, the grazing of cattle and the building of houses.

Through each of three classes and its functions, there accrues to the state a special virtue: through the class of rulers wisdom, through the class of wardens courage, through the class of workers temperance, which as securing obedience to rulers is peculiarly the virtue of the last class. From the due union of these three virtues in the general life of the state there arises a virtue, consequently, which represents the systematic articulation of the totality, the organic distribution of the whole into its moments. With the lowest class, that of the manual labourers, Plato occupies himself the least, for the state it is only an instrument. Even legislation and the administration of justice in reference to the labouring mass of the people he considers inessential. The distance between the rulers and the wardens is less marked. Rather as if reason were but the highest development of courage, Plato allows, by analogy with the fundamental psychological bipartition, the two classes to pass over into each other, in providing that the oldest and best of the wardens shall be selected for rulers. The education of the wardens, therefore, shall be carefully planned and administered by the state, in order that with them the principle of courage, without forfeiting the energy peculiar to it, may be imbued with reason. The most virtuous and dialectically the most accomplished among the wardens, are immediately on completion of their thirtieth year, to be taken apart, tried and ordered to

the discharge of offices. When in these again they have proved themselves, they are in their fiftieth year to be raised to the highest rank and to be held bound in duty, if they have realised the idea of the good, to substantiate that exemplar in the state, yet so that each only when his turn comes shall undertake the control of the state, but shall devote to philosophy the rest of his time. By means of these dispositions the state shall be exalted into an unconditional sovereignty of reason under the guidance of the idea of the good.

Coming to the critique of Plato's state in the light of Basava's Kalyan state, we may boldly assert that Basava like Plato based his state on the notion of justice which implies the good life. Basava develops his theory of society by defining the notions of justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, the heavenly world and the human world etc. He defines religion as a matter of mercy, since mercy is the root of religion. That which is true, good and beautiful is heavenly, and that which is otherwise is earthly. To speak the truth is heavenly, to tell a lie is worldly. Good character is a heaven itself, whereas bad conduct is a hell. Basava at last concludes the basis of his thesis that a Sharana is one who wishes good to all creatures including birds and beasts and acts accordingly.

Basava also distinguishes the world of sense from the world of spirit. He deprecates the play of passions and advocates their sublimation through social service. Mortal existence is not Maya: worldly life is not an illusion; but the greed of a man's mind is Maya. The

passion of man should be curbed and tuned to the good of humanity. The individuality of the person is retained in the universality of society. But Plato's State does away with the individuality and particularity of persons so that the mortal world loses its identity in the ideal world. In Plato there is no reciprocity of individual good and social well-being. Hence the relative freedom of an individual is sacrificed at the altar of the social good. Moreover Plato regards the mass of people like workers and agriculturists as instruments of society. As Prof. Caird remarks:

“ On the one hand, sharing, as he does, in the Greek view that the higher life is only for the few— for those who are capable of intellectual culture and in proportion as they are capable of it, he is unable to conceive the lower classes, those engaged in agricultural or industrial labour, as organic members of the State; he is obliged to regard them as the instruments of a society in whose higher advantages they have no share. And on the other hand, he is so solicitous to exclude all self-seeking and directly to merge private in social good, that he deprives even the forward citizens of personal rights and destroys the family lest it should become the rival of the state. He thus seems to secure the unity of the state, not by subordinating the personal and private interests of its members, but rather by preventing any consciousness of such interest from arising, and the result is that he reduces it to a mechanical, instead of raising it to a spiritual or

organic unity. In the reaction against the individualistic tendencies represented by the Sophists, he finds no way to maintain order except by the absolute suppression of individual freedom. "

Since the Lingayat movement is based on the uplift and equality of the masses by abolishing the class-ridden society of Brahmanism, Basava fought for the right of the common man. Hence he retained the relative freedom of the masses in struggle for the common good of mankind. Unlike Plato, Basava did not divide society into the class of intellectuals and the mass of manual workers. He did not advocate the social maxim of philosophy for the few and mythology for the many but held philosophy to be the right of the rabble. Hence Basava's Aubhava Mantap, was composed of scholars and philosophers mostly from the rank and file of the populace.

There is a great difficulty in admitting such a division between two classes of citizens in the same state—a division in which the higher class possesses the esoteric truth of philosophy, while the lower class is fed with mythological fables. This aristocratic State of Plato certainly resembles the class-ridden society of Vedic Hinduism. The upper intellectual class of Brahmins had access to the spiritual knowledge of the Vedas. The women and untouchables including the manual workers were prohibited from studying books on religion and philosophy. The warrior class combined with the intellectual class of Brahmins exploited the down-trodden masses in all possible ways. The Varnashramadharma

is a relic of Indian slavery and backwardness. Plato trod in the footsteps of the ancient Hindu philosophers and made a blunder. Like the Brahmin rulers of old, Plato decreed that the masses existed for the intellectual upper class. The idea of a class of philosopher-kings who are to keep the keys of knowledge for themselves and act as a kind of earthly providence to other men, sins, like Carlyle's conception of hero-worship, against the solidarity of humanity. A secret doctrine of philosophy is almost a contradiction in terms: for philosophy can not live and refuse to communicate itself to any one who is capable of receiving its lessons.

But Plato had an ideal of a good life, whereas Brahmanism had no such goal. Plato was liberal enough to show concessions to the warrior class which should be admitted to the higher class after a few tests. Such is not the case with the Vedic society. Brahmins were the sole custodians of spiritual learning. At times they raised a war against Kshatriya kings to overthrow their sovereignty. But Basava's conception of society is better than either. Basava was a dialectician and foresaw in the anti-democratic class of Brahmins, the source of the slavery and misery of Hindu society. Though he was born a Brahmin, he was wholly opposed to Brahmanism which was reactionary and anti-social. Hence he renounced the Brahmanic cult and propounded his new democratic doctrine of Lingayatism.

Like Plato Basava banished from his state the Hindu mythologies like the Ramayana and Mahabharat, beca-

use these were reactionary and could not lead society to freedom and progress. The Vedas, Shrutis, Smritis, etc. had no place in Lingayat society. The Manusmriti is a charter of Indian slavery. The Vedas speak of violence; all this literature is steeped in hero-worship and class morality. The Lingayat saints banned the reading of such books because of the dictatorial spirit embedded in them. Thus what do we learn from the Mahabharat but of the feuds between brother and brother? What does the Ramayana teach except the fight with demons? Thus observes Lord Basava:

May I regard the Shastra as great? It preaches Karma. May I think the Veda superior? It teaches animal slaughter. May I hold the Smriti to be great? It searches for the object by keeping it before us. Since you are not present in all these, you can not be found, O Lord Kudalsangama, except in triple social service.

Basava on the other hand encouraged democratic literature based on broad ideals. Of course the basis of such scriptures leads to a belief in divinity, which is monotheistic. Basava reared society on the monotheistic background as against the natural religious and polytheistic bases of the Vedas and Agamas. Faith in God—a faith that good is stronger than evil, and even that it is all-powerful—is the necessary basis of our higher life, and without some such faith, morality is apt to shrink



into a helpless striving after an unattainable ideal and must, therefore, cease to exercise its highest inspiring power. To hold that what we regard as best and highest is also the ultimate reality, the principle from which all comes and on which all depends, is the great religious spring of moral energy. From early times the social union has found its consecration in the idea that it is a union of men based on their common relation to God who is the guardian of the destinies of his people. On such a faith Basava founded his society. Plato's State too had such a basis.

There is a contradiction in the fact that Plato, who has carefully built up the system of the state as a social and political ideal to be realized in the immediate life of man, seems suddenly to soar away from such practical considerations and to regard all earthly existence as "less than nothing and vanity." This opposition, as a German writer points out, cannot be bridged over:

"Here we find a great rift in Platonism. It was as the moralising follower of Socrates, that Plato drew the first sketch of the Ideal state, but it is as the metaphysician—who looks beyond the changing appearance to the real being of things—that he completes it. These two tendencies meet in conflict, yet neither can free itself from the other. The reformer, who would heal the disease of his people, must believe in the usefulness of his own art; but the speculative thinker must condemn the fleeting forms of life in view of the substantial reality that under-

lies; the rift in Platonism is however the rift that rends the life of all noble spirits."

But Basava's view of life is different. He does not hold life to be illusory and fleeting. He recognizes the reality of life and the world, when wedded to the divinity of God. The world as Shakti is associated with Shiva, which completes the Reality of Lingayatism. The world and life are real because they belong to God. Basava maintains the reciprocal reality of the world and God. In Plato there is a compartmental division between the illusory world and the ideal world. Basava bridges the gulf by ascribing reality to both. He was more deep, democratic and philosophic than Plato. He tried to solve social problems like cruelty, inequality, widowhood etc, through religion. He saw society through its religious aspect in those religion-ridden days. He tested every problem, social, political and economic, by the standard of monotheism. Hence his message was:

*Heaven and Earth are not different,  
Speaking the truth is heavenly;  
Telling lies is humanly;  
Good conduct is heaven;  
Bad character is hell;  
O Lord Kudalsangama, you are a witness.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### *JAINISM AND LINGAYATISM.*

Another powerful religious force that parted company with the orthodox Hinduism is Jainism. Jainism flourished in Karnatak for nearly a thousand years from 200 A. D. to 1200 A. D. The Chalukya Kings of Badami ( in Bijapur district ) and Kalyan ( in Nizam State ) were Jains. It is recorded in Indian History that Pulikeshi II was an emperor of the whole of the Deccan and defeated the great emperor Harshavardhana of Northern India. In his Court there was a Persian envoy. These Jain Kings encouraged Kannad art, literature and learning. Aihole ( a village near Badami ) was a University capital. A Sanskrit poet named Ravikirti who is as famous as Kalidas lived under the patronage of a Jain King. Kannada poets like Ranna and Pompa had their hey-days under the Jain rule.

Jainism, the religion of Ahimsa, ( non-injury ) is probably as old as the Vedic religion. In the Rig-Vedic Mantras, we have clear references to Rishabha and Arishtanemi, two of the Jain Tirthankaras, the former being the founder of Jainism-

Throughout the Vedic, Brahmanic and Aupani-shadic periods we find two currents of thought opposed to each other running parallel, some-times the one becoming dominant, sometimes the other. One enjoined animal sacrifice and the other condemned it. Hence it

is obvious that from the very earliest period of Hindu thought non-violent religion and the opposite were contending for supremacy. "Ma himsayat Sarva bhutani" (Do not kill any creature) the Vedic hymn occurs side by side with "Sarvamethe Sarvam hanyat" (Kill all kinds of animals in the Sarvamedha sacrifice.) The mythic rivalry of Vishvamitra and Vasistha and the story of Sunahsepa occurring in the Rig-Vedic hymn similarly indicate the existence of and rivalry between two schools of thought, one sanctioning the sacrifice and the other opposing it. The Kshatriya class led the movement of Jainism and the Brahmin class opposed it. But in the Aupanishadic stage Vedic ritualism was assigned a secondary status and Atmavidya (self-realization) with its doctrine of Tapas (self-discipline) was accorded a high place. Consequently Jainism developed in the latter course. Finally the recent excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro brought to light still more surprising facts that on the seals and coins dug out from these places are found figures resembling the Jain Tirthankaras.

The Jain philosophy might be summed up in one sentence. The living and the non-living, by coming into contact with each other, forge certain energies which bring about birth, death and various experiences of life. This process could be stopped and the energies already forged discharged by a course of discipline leading to salvation. A close analysis of this brief statement shows that it involves seven propositions. Firstly, that there is something called the living; secondly, that there is

something called the non-living; thirdly, that the two come into contact with each other; fourthly, that the contact leads to the production of some energies; fifthly, that the process of contact could be stopped; sixthly, that the existing energies could also be exhausted; and lastly, that salvation could be achieved. These seven propositions are called the seven *tattvas* or realities by the Jains. The first two great truths are that there is a Jiva or soul and that there is an Ajiva or non-soul. These two exhaust between them all that exists in the universe. A recognition of the two entities at once marks the Jain system out as dualistic like the Sankhya and distinguishable from the monistic Vedanta which accepts only one reality without a second.

“The Reality according to Jain philosophy is uncreated and eternal. ‘Utpada-Vyaya-dravya-yuktam sat.’ Reality is that which is characterized by appearance and disappearance in the midst of permanence. This is the peculiar doctrine as to the nature of reality found in Jain Metaphysics and the only parallel to this in western thought is the Hegelian doctrine of the dialectical nature of reality. Thesis and Antithesis reconciled and held together by Synthesis. Every object of reality embodies in itself an affirmative and a negative aspect synthesized and held together by its own complex nature, quite analogous to the biological principle of metabolism comprehending and reconciling in itself the two opposite processes of *Katabolism* and

*Anabolism.* Such is the complex nature of reality according to Jain Metaphysics. It maintains its identity and permanency only through the continued process of changes consisting of origin and decay—identity in the midst of variety and permanency through change. Neither the permanency nor the process of change can be separated from each other. Each is indispensable to the other and hence cannot be separated in reality, though one may be differentiated from the other in thought and speech. From this triple nature of reality arise various other philosophical doctrines associated with Jain metaphysics. \*\*

Non-violence (Ahimsa) is the keystone of the Jain ethical arch. The ethics of both the householder and the hermit is based upon the doctrine of Ahimsa. The path of righteousness consists of the three elements—right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. These three are termed Ratnatraya i. e. three Jewels which together constitute the way to salvation. These correspond to the Bhakti, Jnana and Karma Yogas of Hinduism. But the difference is that while Hinduism regards them as singly sufficient to lead the aspirant to the final goal, Jainism considers a combination of the three as essential for the desired end. Of the three right faith is the foundation of Dharma. In order to possess faith a Jaina should get rid of three kinds of superstition and eight kinds of haughtiness or arrogance. The first superstition is that one can attain spiritual purity by bathing in a river.

\* The Cultural Heritage of India.

Similarly walking through fire is associated with sanctity. People believe in the powers of village gods and goddesses. Attempts to propitiate such gods with the object of securing certain selfish ends will come under the second type of superstition (Deva-Mudha). Thirdly, devotion to false selfish ascetics and acceptance of their teachings as gospel truth could come under the third type of superstition (pasandhi-mudhi). Freedom from these three types of superstition is the primary condition of right faith. Secondly, freedom from the eight types of arrogance is a condition of right faith. Humility is a cardinal virtue which opens the gate of the kingdom of God. Humility can be achieved by renouncing arrogance and vain pride of any kind. "Do not be arrogant because you are intelligent. Do not be haughty because of your caste. Do not be conceited because of your tapas or yoga etc." Even caste pride must be got rid of. For, according to the teacher even a Matanga (Chandal-untouchable,) if he has right faith, will be considered the God of Gods. Eliminating superstition and pride right faith must be made the foundation of religious life. On this foundation equipped with knowledge or samyak-jnana, samyak-charitra or right conduct must thrive. The life of the householder is better in certain respects than that of the hermit.

The first rule or vrata of life is to observe non-violence (Ahimsa) not only in deed but in word and thought also. Violence or Himsa in any form should be avoided. Non-injury to animal and insect should be practised. The Jain conception of non-violence implies

not merely abstaining from direct injury but also abstaining from the two types of indirect injury—instigating others to cruelty and approving of cruelty in others.

The short sketch of Jainism reveals similarities with Lingayatism. Lingayatism is antiritualistic. Hence both were a revolt against the Vedic priest craft. If Jainism developed the logical trend and the pluralistic tendency embedded in the Vedas and Upanishads, Lingayatism carried consistently the monotheistic and materialistic traits of the Veda and the Upanishad to their logical conclusion. Lingayatism developed its materialism, this manifold samsar or world, through monotheism. Jainism finds it hard to reconcile the contradiction between moism (Soul's union with Paramatm Ekanta) and pluralism. It fails to bridge the gulf between matter and soul. But Lingayatism solves the difficulty through the concept of Shakti. The Jain monistic concept of reality does not logically evolve its philosophic dualism and religious pluralism.

The Guna-sthanas of the Jains have the same significance as Satsthalas of the Lingayats. Moreover the words 'sthala' and 'sthana' are synonymous. Lingayatism has six stages while Jainism has fourteen stages through which the soul has to pass before it reaches perfection. The underlying principle in both seems to be the same.

The Jain ethics resembles in many respects the Lingayat moral philosophy. Both systems regard non-violence as the corner-stone. Both fight superstitions



and arrogance of any kind. Lingayatism bases religion on right faith. But Lingayatism is more critical about social customs and manners. Lingayat view of ethics is more rational and social hence practical. Basava observes.

By worshipping Vishnu I saw people 'got their shoulders burnt. By worshipping a Jaina, I found people living naked. By the worship of Mailar people behaved like dogs and I saw them bark. But I observed that one became a devotee of God by worshipping the saints of our Kudalasanga.

Mahavira was the first prophet of non-violence. He gave an idealistic interpretation to the doctrine of non-violence. Buddha based the doctrine on realism. Basava gave it a practical basis—utilitarian interpretation. Gandhiji interprets it in the light of abstract nationalism and Mr. M. N. Roy explains it in the sense of humanism. Mahavir's movement gradually declined. For people found it hard to practise non-violence in word, thought and deed towards even animals and insects. Buddha's revolution also failed, because the doctrine of Nirvana was over-emphasized at the cost of ethics and sociology. Basava's revolt too failed. For sufficient propaganda was not undertaken to organise and mobilise the masses on the country wide scale. Besides, the leaders had a very short time at their disposal. Lastly, political backing was lacking. Hence the movement was too young to stem the tide of orthodoxy.

## CHAPTER XV

### **BUDDHISM AND LINGAYATISM.**

The starting point of Buddhism is not a dogma or belief in the supernatural, but the fact of the existence of sorrow and suffering, not merely the sorrow and suffering of the poor and the wretched but also of those that live in the lap of luxury. Its goal is not heaven or a union with God or Brahman, but to find a refuge for man from the miseries of the world in the safe heaven of an intellectual and ethical life through self-conquest and self-culture. The Buddhist is not concerned so much with the nature of the world as with its practical interpretation. If he does not believe in independent objectively existent supernatural personality, he believes in Dharmakaya, a reality practically recognised in respect to its ultimate attitude to his ideals and this belief serves as much to conserve value as the belief in an actual personal God. Buddha said:

“It is in the nature of things that doubt should arise. Do not believe in traditions merely because they have been handed down for many generations and in many places; do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and spoken of by many; do not believe because the written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in what you have fancied, thinking by a *deva* or a wonderful being. After observation and analysis when it agreed

with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it."

(Kalama Sutta Anguttara Nikaya.) Accordingly Buddhism requires nothing to be accepted on trust without enquiry. But it is said that the 'will to believe' plays a more important part than reason. 'The will to believe' may afford delight to the imagination but it cannot secure permanent happiness nor enable man to fight against the forces of darkness. If religion is to be a knowledge and not creed, a certainty and not a doubt, a real hope in death and not a wail of hysteria, a law of life and not a vague ecstasy, a solidly founded, convincing, coherent, definite logical system and not an irresponsible riots of emotion, then reason, not superstition, nor mere tradition, nor the will to believe, nor pragmatic utility, must be its foundation. As the Jatakamala says, he who questions the validity of reason by means of reasoning with argument deserts his own position. Buddha wants every man to doubt, inquire and be honestly convinced before following the way. "One must not accept my Dharma from reverence, but first try it as gold is tried by fire" says the Master.

In Buddhism there are no beliefs which are not the outcome of knowledge. It does not constrain the rational human mind to dwell upon insoluble problems. Is the world finite or is it eternal? Such questions have no value for Buddhism. The Blessed one in Potthapad Sutta says, "Then enquiries have nothing to do with things<sup>s</sup> as they are, with the realities we know; they are not

concerned with the law of life, they do not make for right conduct; they do not conduce to the absence of lust, to freedom from passion, to right effort, to higher insight, to inward peace." Nor does Buddhism contain anything esoteric or mystic.

Buddha preached the equality of all mankind by breaking down the barriers of caste. He proclaimed: "My dharma is a dharma of mercy of all; proclaim it freely to all men; it will cleanse the good and evil, the rich and poor alike, it is as vast as the spaces of heaven that exclude none. Whoever is compassionate will feel the longing to save not only himself but others. He will say to himself: 'when others are following the dharma, I shall rejoice at it as if it were myself. When others are without it, I shall mourn the loss as my own.' So shall the healing word embrace the world, and all who are sunk in the ocean of misery be saved." Working in this spirit Buddhism became a religion for all and has spread over vast tracts in Asia, India, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, China and Japan and is slowly leavening the thought and life of Europe and America.

About the status of women in Buddhism Talboys Wheeler says: "Wives and daughters are not shut up as prisoners in the inner apartment, but are free as air to take their pleasure on all occasions of merry-making and festivals. Courting time is an institution of the country... instead of arbitrary unions between boys and girls, there are marriages of affection between young women and

young men, in which neither parent nor priests have voice or concern."

The ideal underlying the Buddhist Sangha is self-government, the government of all, for all, by all. At the various Samities (councils) disputes were settled by ballot and not by authority. While in the Hindu monasteries the dying abbot nominates his successor, in Burma the head of the Sangh, the Tathanabaing, is elected by all the members of the Sangha. Buddha spoke to the Bhikshus on the conditions of the welfare of a community "O Bhikshu be full of faith, modest in heart, afraid of sin, anxious to learn, strong in energy, active in mind and full of wisdom."

When the selected monks failed to settle a dispute, the matter was referred back to the Sangha which would appoint one of the members possessing requisite qualifications as *Salakaguhapaka*. The votes were then taken by means of Salaka and the will of the majority was accepted as the just. As great responsibility rested on the Salakagahapaka, many rules had to be framed to guard the misuse of powers by him. Such occasions were rare in the Sangha.

The Buddhistic Sangha finds its parallel in the Lingayat Math. The classical example was the Anubhava Mantap. The Anubhava Mantap was democratic in form and content. Buddha first hesitated to admit women into the Sangha and at last he was forced to give his consent by a queen. Basava admitted women into

the Mantap without any hesitation. As in Sangha so in the Lingayat Math even now the opinion of the citizens is sought in nominating a person to the Math. The dying abbot of a Math is not empowered to nominate his successor. The devotees of the Math have their say and sway over the affairs of the Math.

As Dharma is to Buddha a matter of mercy so is it to Basava. Basava proclaims:

What is that religion that is void of mercy ?  
Mercy is essential to all animals. Indeed  
mercy is the root of religion. Lord Kudala-  
sangama does not contend the opposite.

Reason and faith, both play their parts in the Lingayat religion. It is through the torchlight of reason that the Lingayat Sharanas analysed and exposed the orthodox religions and their dangerous implications. They examined critically traditional Shastras, Vedas, Puranas, Itihasas, Smritis, Agamas etc and founded their Lingayat faith. Thus a Sharana named Siddharama holds:

Shashtra is the weapon of Cupid. Vedanta is a mental disease; Purana is the eulogy of the dead. Logic (tark) is a play of monkeys. Agama is an effort of Yog. History (Itihas) is a story of kings, Smriti is a discrimination of sin and merit. But the saying of a Sharana renders great help in knowing your Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna.

Reasoned faith was the basis of Lingayatism. Reason and experience ( Vichara and Anubhava ) are a prop to faith. There are no two opinions on the ethics and sociology of both religions regarding their similarity. Lingayatism is not other-worldly as orthodox Brahmanism but is this-worldly like Buddhism. The difference lies in the way of approach to the problem. The Lingayat social ethics was based on monotheistic religion but the Buddhistic one depended on Agnosticism. Agnosticism is more progressive no doubt where there is scientific environment; it becomes equally dangerous when the revolutionary inventions and scientific outlook are lacking. Then Agnosticism sits on the fence since it is dubious in conception. So Buddhistic agnosticism suffered. Besides Buddhism found it difficult to reconcile the doctrine of Nirvana with its social ethics. When the Buddhists laid more stress on Nirvana, then Buddhism had to degenerate. But the Lingayat Monotheism was not dubious. It was a definite ideology. Lingayatism developed humanism through monotheism. Buddhism did it through agnosticism. Anyway the uplift of the masses was a common ideal to both the movements. But when the Lingayats put more emphasis on the theological aspect of the religion, ignoring its social aspect, then the movement began to fall back. A religion whose sole ideal was to liberate the Indian masses from all sorts of bondage becomes reactionary when that lofty aim is neglected. But the monastic and agnostic tendencies of Buddhism led to the moral and philosophic degeneration. 'Agnosticism is too apt to emphasize the limitations of knowledge, some.

times having a flavour of dogmatism, confidently affirming that the kind of knowledge which philosophy seeks is unattainable, thus going beyond the more modest attitude of doubt. It is, therefore, contrary to the spirit of philosophy which is that of persistent, unwearied inquiry. One writer speaks of the agnostic as a quitter.'

The Buddhistic monasticism was a sort of asceticism. It was the result of Nihilism (Sunyavada). Nihilism holds there is nothing real as every thing is devoid of its innate or independent nature. A nihilist rejects the reality of worldly objects because they are baseless. It is recorded that the best part of the manhood of kingdom of Magadha entered the monastic life. Buddhist monasticism was analogous with its Christian prototype. Both represented despair caused by the collapse of the old social order, and a vain effort to solve the problems of life by running away from it. But Lingayatism was up against monasticism, be it Buddhistic or Brahmanic. It was a purely Social revolution untainted by monasticism and asceticism.



## CHAPTER XVI

### LOKAYATAVADA AND LINGAYATISM.

Lokayatavada is an ancient philosophy of life. Being dissatisfied with the Vedic Natural religion the Lokayatikas propounded their doctrine in antithesis to Vedic Brahmanism. It is a materialist school of thought. Hence it was opposed to the Brahmanic metaphysics. Lokayatvada took stock of the material conditions of the people in those days. Society was full of Vedic ritual and hypocrisy had its full sway over the people. Vedic religion was farcical and hypocritical. There was poverty in the midst of plenty. There was awe-stricken oppression. Hence a new philosophy was a dire necessity then. Lokayatavada had its genesis during those critical times.

Lokayatikas examined the old Vedic religion and strongly refuted its doctrines. They deny past and future births as there is no reality existing before birth or after death except the four primary elements and the mind is the product of these. So it cannot be maintained that the mind at death passes on to another body. The mind must be different in different bodies. The consciousness of a body which has already perished cannot be related to the new body which comes into being. One mind cannot produce another mind after total annihilation. The theory that the foetus is endowed with consciousness is untenable. For consciousness presupposes sensation through the sense organs, all knowledge being

posterior to and derived from experience. The sense organs do not function in the foetus. further there is no soul apart from the body. If there be any soul, it is only the living principle of all organisms. It exists as long as the body exists. It is the body that feels, sees, hears and thinks. As nothing answering to the soul exists after death to go to the next world, there is no necessity of admitting the existence of such a place.

With the denial of the doctrine of Karma this school denies the existence of the universal mysterious agency called fate ( *adrishta* or *daiva* ). It denies the existence of merits or demerits acquired in our previous life. If you contend that fate must be admitted as the cause of the differences and determinations of the phenomenal world, then Brahaspati, the leader of the Lokayat Movement, brings forward the doctrine of ' *Svabhava* ' or spontaneous generation of things according to their respective natures. Religion is as harmful as opium. Prayer is the hope of men who are weak; worship is insincere egotism to save oneself from the tortures of hell, and prophets are the greatest liars among men. The Vedas are no authority; for they contain mantras which do not convey any meaning; some are ambiguous or contradictory and some repeat what is already known. As regards the other portions of the Vedas, they are full of discrepancies and contradictions. A line of action prescribed by one text is condemned by another. They speak of results that are never realized. Religious exercises and ascetic practices are merely a means to livelihood for men devoid of intellect and manliness.

“There is no heaven, no final liberation, nor any soul in another world. Nor do the actions of our four castes, orders etc produce any real effect. The Agnihotra, the three Vedas, the Ascetic's three staves and smearing one's self with ashes, were made by Nature as the livelihood of those destitute of knowledge and manliness. If a beast slain in the Jyotishtoma rite will itself go to heaven, why then does not the sacrificer forthwith offer his own father? .... When once the body becomes ashes, how can it even return again? If he who departs from the body, goes to another world, how is it that he comes not back again, restless for love of his kindred? Hence it is only as a means of livelihood that Brahmins have established here all these ceremonies for the dead; there is no other fruit anywhere.” \*

God cannot be the judge of our actions, because in that case partiality and cruelty on His part would be inevitable. It is better not to have a God than to have a cruel and partial God. Fatalism is ruled out. The Vedas<sup>s</sup> reveal no signs of infallibility. So how can we ascertain that an all-knowing, all-pervading and all-powerful spirit exists? Nature, not God, is the watchword of this school.

“Charvak taught: Pleasure is the object of life. Real pleasure can be had only in this life. It is a mistake to sacrifice this life with the hope of having pleasure in some other existence. It is like running

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\* Sarvadarshana Sangraha: Vidyaranya.

after a mirage. Religion makes men miserable by persuading them to abandon pleasure. Thus idle and indolent are not able to do what is necessary to earn enjoyment and pleasure. Religious ceremonials are all swindles invented by these men. They have neither meaning nor use. The world is there for men to enjoy and be happy. Everything there is of necessity. The followers of Charvak denied Buddhist ritualism and scoffed at the idea of Nirvana." \*

The result of this Lokayat Movement was an aspiration for freedom an all round freedom-freedom for the individual as well as for society, for man as well as for woman. The Lokayatikas called upon all people to cast off their agelong shackles and march shoulder to shoulder towards freedom. Consequently the wonderful result of this struggle for freedom was the rise of Buddhism. Buddha's views against the Vedic sacrifices, the memorizing and fruitless repetition of the Vedic hymns, the caste system, the authority of the Vedas and the worship of the deities, the magic rites and the ascetic practices-have their counter part in the views of the Lokayat. It is perhaps because Buddhism was greatly influenced by the Lokayat school that we find in later accounts of this system, the doctrines of Buddha and Charvaka almost amalgamated and the name 'Charvaka' sometimes applied to Buddha. India had been seething with free thinking and Buddha was the product of this freedom. No man ever lived so godless, yet so godlike a life as Buddha did.

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\* Materialism: M. N. Roy.

We find Charvaka in Epicuros-the Athenian philosopher. Both were hedonists. The Vishnupurana has a record of this Lokayat philosophy. It refers to the set of the people of very ancient origin who were free to live wherever they liked, unworried by conventions, pure at heart and blameless in action. Virtue or vice they had none; they lived in an atmosphere of perfect freedom in which men could move without the fear of conventional dogmas of religion and social usage. But the people were not satisfied merely with social and religious freedom; politics became incorporated with the Lokayat school, which ignored *anvikshiki* (metaphysics) and *trayi* (Vedas) which dealt with the supersensuous, and appreciated *dandaniti* (politics) and *vartha* (economics) as the only branches of knowledge deserving special cultivation. The earthly king became the only God. So long *Kama* or pleasure was considered to be the only good of human life; now *artha* or material advantage was added to it. As the Lokayatikas captured the hearts of the cultured as well as the common people, all became earnest in working out their immediate earthly welfare. The result of this movement was the origination and propagations of different arts and sciences. Vatsayana mentions some sixty-four names of Indian fine arts which flourished probably in this period of Indian materialism.

Like Lokayatavada Lingayatism analysed and exposed the Vedas, the Shastras, the Puranas, Shrutis and Smritis. Criticism was the key-note of Lingayatism. Hence the Lingayats could construct a new edifice of

Lingayatism. Criticism and contruction go hand in hand. If Lokayatavada criticised the Brahmanic literature from the materialstic standpoint Lingayatism did so from the point of view of monotheism. The Lokayata way was materialistic, the Lingayat method was monotheistic. The aim of both the movements was the same-the good of humanity. The one brought about social revolution through materialism and the other did it through monotheism. In fact Basava achieved materialism-social and material good of the people-through monotheism. Brahaspati attained it through atheism.

Lingayatism does away with the doctrine of Karma, because it leads to fatalism-cosequently to bondage. It does not advocate the theory of rebirth; Karma and rebirth kill the individuality and block the movement of freedom and progress. Karma and rebirth shall have to presuppose the existence of the other world like heaven. But the Lingayatism is this worldly. We should make this world a heavenly place, a happpy abode (*Kalyan Sristi*) for human beings to dwell in. Lingayatism was up against the Vedic ritualism, the Brahmanic Varnashramadharmā, the Agamic idol-worship, the Vedantic hair-splitting, the Logician's verbatism, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite other-worldliness and the Gita vainglory:

The Lingayat way is not the Māya view of Veda, Purana, Shruti, Shiddhanta, Logic, Charvaka, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Deshya etc.

Nor is it the way of Siddhas and Sadhakas.  
 But a 'Lingangi' Sharana is like a wave  
 without sound,  
 Like a flower that is not ruffled by wind,  
 Like motion which is not tactual .....  
 Like colour that is not tainted by wind ...  
 Such a Sharana is Sadashivamurti.

Alphabet, accountancy, mathematics, dramaturgy, astrology, mataphysics (atma vidya), logic, grammar, etymology, dictionary, gambling, science of medicine, palmistry, aesthetics, horse-riding ... four Vedas, Shruti, Shmriti, ..... thieving, literature, philology, instrumental music, dancing, wrestling, archery, magic, mantra, siddis etc—What is the use of learning all these? A man may become well-versed in these sixty-four lores. But he is not called a Lingayat (Lingavant). A Lingavant is not a match for all these learned men combined together, My lord Kalideva.

The vachanas quoted above distinguishes the Lingayat way from the Vedanta tradition. Further in contrast to Lokayatavada, Lingayatism posits the existence of God-one without a second. The Lokayatikas argue that the positting of God leads to partiality and cruelty on the part of divinity. Hence they do away with divinity. But the Lingayat materialism-the materialist philosophy of life-is located in monotheism. By abolishing the ini-

quitous social doctrine of Varnashramadharma, the iniquity, the cruelty, the partiality-the social ills of worldly existence—were reduced to the minimum in the Lingayat society. Hence the Lingayat God cannot but become impartial and just. Lingayatism was a movement of freedom circumscribed by monotheism. That is the distinctive feature of the Lingayat movement. Basava combined harmoniously materialism and spiritualism, atheism and theism, physics and metaphysics, morality and religion, sociology and theology, rationalism and mysticism, reason and faith-by the concept of Shiva-Shakti. Buddha achieved the human good through agnosticism; Brahaspati did it through atheism; Mahavir got it through logico-atheism; Ramanuja had it through theism and Basava fulfilled it through monotheism. These Indian social reformers pursued their respective paths and struggled hard for the social emancipation of the ignorant and illiterate Indian masses. Their ways were different because their times were different. Hence we cannot expect the same doctrine to fulfil the requirements of society at all times. Old order changeth yielding place to the new. That is the secret of progress and freedom.



## CHAPTER XVII

### VAISHNAVISM AND LINGAYATISM.

Ramanuja's Vaishnavism is best studied in his Vedanta Sangraha, his commentary on the Gita and, above all, in his Shri Bhashya which is a commentary on the Vedanta Sutras. It is a theistic system which insists upon the personality of God and His kindness to men and the ultimate reality of the human soul and the world. Hence it is calculated to satisfy the religious instincts of humanity more than the pure philosophy of Sankar. According to Ramanuja the Absolute is not impersonal but a personality endowed with all the glorious qualities we know of, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and boundless love. So God is *Saguna and not Nirguna*. The plurality that is involved in the idea of the personality of God exists in Himself. For he has two inseparable *prakaras* or modes namely the world and soul. These are related to Him as the body is related to the soul. They have no existence apart from Him. They inhere in Him as attributes in a substance. But they have two phases-the unmanifest phase and the manifest phase according as God is in His causal state before creation or the effected state after creation.

God created the world with its matter and souls. Matter is real; it undergoes evolution. Matter exists as the mode of God, even after the dissolution of the world. Therefore it is eternal though ever dependent. But the

soul is the higher mode of God than matter as it is a conscious entity. It is eternally real and dependent upon God. The soul is ever atomic (anu) in size dwelling in the heart like a point of light and therefore ever distinct from God. There are three classes of souls-*nitya*, *mukta*, and *baddha*. To the first class belong those who are eternally free and who live with God in Vaikuntha, His supreme abode. To the second belong those who were once subject to *samsar*, but who have now acquired moksha and live with God. But the third class souls are still in the meshes of *samsar* and strive to be liberated.

The universe of the living and non-living is an eternal cyclic process with Pralaya-dissolution and Sristhi creation, alternating each other. God reveals Himself in creations. God not only is the ground of the universe; he is also the controller and Purushottama possessing an infinity of moral perfections. The hope of salvation lies in the saving grace of God. Karma then becomes an attitude of self-surrender. Over-powered by mercy and tenderness God realizes his godliness by saving the sinner. When the universe is steeped in insecurity and sin, the Lord in his infinite mercy appears in the form of divine incarnations (Avataras). The Lord of splendour takes delight in sporting with finite self (Jiva) with a view to transmuting it into its own nature. But the released souls attain to the nature of God and never to identify with Him. They remain atomic in size and dependent on God. They live in fellow-ship with Him either serving or meditating on Him. Thus they never lose their

individuality. As their release comes, if at all, only after quitting the body, there is no such thing as Jivanmukti according to Ramanuja.

“ The Nirguna Brahman which stares at us with frozen eyes regardless of our selfless devotion and silent suffering, is not the God of religious insight. According to Ramanuja Sankar's method leads him to a void which Sankar tries to conceal by a futile play of concepts. His nirguna Brahman is a blank entity. Such a Brahman cannot be known by means of perception, inference or scripture. Ramanuja holds that in the ultimate reality God, determinations, differences, limitations, finitude are found. Brahman has internal difference. Finitude is in the infinite itself. Brahman is a synthetic whole. The qualities are being ( sat ) consciousness ( chit ) and bliss ( anand ). These give Brahman a personality. Brahman is a supreme personality. Individuals are personal in an imperfect way. Personality implies the powers to plan and realize one's purposes. God is perfect personality since he contains all experience in Himself. Prominent qualities of God are knowledge, power and love. Out of His love God created the world, established laws and helps constantly all those who seek to attain perfection. The connection between the qualities and God is natural and eternal. ....

“ Ramanuja holds that every judgment is a synthesis of distincts. When Brahman and the individual soul are placed in the relation of subject and predi-

cate, it follows there is a difference between the two. Subject and predicate are distinct meanings referred to the same substance. Brahman and Jiva are related as substance and attribute. Ramanuja's God is not an impassive absolute who looks down upon us from the height of heaven but joins us in the experience of our life, shares our ends and works for the upbuilding of the world. God is the Lord of Karma. Ramanuja recognizes the human freedom and divine sovereignty. Individuals entirely depend upon God for their activity. God gives the soul a body, and gives power to employ the body. God declares what is good and bad. God is not responsible for the misery of the world. The soul has a free choice and may act so as to interfere with the will of God. The law of Karma expresses the will of God. The order of Karma is set up by God who is the ruler of Karma (Karmadhyaksh). Since the law is dependent on God's nature, God himself may be regarded as rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked.... He does not care to upset his laws and interfere with the world scheme. God, though immanent in the world, does not wish to be intrusive." \*

Vaishnavism was a revolt against Brahmanism headed by Sankar. Sankar's doctrine of monism with its Mayavada reinstated the Varnashramadharma. But Ramanuja's qualified monism ( Visisthadvaita ) opposed Sankar's monistic philosophy and consequently strove to break down the Varnashramadharma. Ramanuja opened

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\* Indian Philosophy Vol. II: Sir, S. Radhakrishnan.

the doors of temples to the untouchables. Every man whether he is a Brahmin or a Sudra should have direct access to the temple deity. The temple at Melukoti was thrown open to the lower castes. The modification of monism coupled with the resultant rejection of Mayavada led Ramanuja logically to the removal of Chaturvarna system. So, philosophical change led to the change in the status quo. This is the revolutionary tendency of Vaishnavism.

But the Shaktivisisthadvaita of Lingayatism is in line with the Visisthadvaita of Vaishnavism. But there are significant subtleties. By conceding equal status to Shakti in the Lingayat Absolute of Shiva-Shakti Basava recognised the reality of the world and the soul. Shakti and Shiva have reciprocity and identity. Both are interdependent and imply each other. But Ramanuja assigns a secondary place to Prakriti. Matter and soul are eternal but ever dependent upon God. Thereby the reality of the world and soul becomes relative but that of God becomes absolute. An individual cannot rise to the status of God, nor is the world as real as God. But a Lingayat can attain to the status of divinity and the human world can be divinized, because both the soul and the world are as real as God. They are in the Divine; therefore they share the same reality as Divinity. The reality of humanity and divinity is the same. If the one is real the other must be equally real. That is the secret of the combination of Shiva-Shakti. Prof. M. R. Sakhare clarifies the point in detail:

“... It is clear from this that Shiva and Shakti are one individual whole. The Lingayat philosophers

give a special name '*Samarasya*' to this intimate union, *Samarasya* means essential identity and is different from '*Tadatmya*' ..... Hence Shiva is characterized and distinguished (Vishistha) by his power or capacity to work which is only a phase of his '*prakasha*' in the form of '*Vimarsha*'. This is Shaktivisisthadvaita ..... Hence '*visisthatva*' does not imply any inseparable union of two or more substances, like Brahman, Jiva and Achit of the Ramanuja system or of South Indian Shaivism as maintained by Shrikanth. Visisthatva simply stresses the nature of Chit or Prakash that connotes the power to work wonders.

"There is another reason why the essential identity ( *Samarasya* ) of Shiva and Shakti is stressed and termed Shaktivisisthadvaita. The reason is that the Lingayat philosophers like the Kasmereans do not agree with and approve of '*Kevaladvaita*' of Shankaracharya, the preacher of Mayavada, the theory of illusion. Like the Kasmere philosophers the Lingayats hold that the Lord's creation is real and no illusion. They reject Mayavada and prove that creation is the result of Shiva's wonder-working power that is capable of doing things which are impossible for any other agency to do .....

"..... But it may be said that the South Indian Shivadvaitha is similar to the Visisthadvaita of Ramanuja. But the Kashmere and Lingayat schools differ from

both Ramanuja's and Sankar's doctrines. Maritontadarya the commentator of *Siddhant-Shikhamani* says that *Shakti-Visistha-dvaita* is real 'Nirvishe-shadvaita' rather than that of Shankaracharya's Kevaladvaita, which he means, is not true, being defective and objectionable.

"..... In this school of Kevaladvaita Brahman, the Supreme Reality, is a mere 'sundered abstraction' sitting apart from the phenomenal universe. The conception of Brahman, the changeless unconditioned reality (Kutastha) is tantamount to some inert principle like the Sankhya 'purusha'. 'Nirvishesha' rejects the Visisthadvaita of Ramanuja (and for that matter that of the Shrikantha school) in as much as in this school the Parabrahman has the Vishesha in the form of chit (Jiva) and achit (Jada). These two chit and achit are separate entities quite distinct from the Brahman though in intimate union with it." \*

In opposition to the Vaishnava concept of liberation after death (Videhamukti) Lingayats hold the view of liberation in this every life (Sadehamukti). A man can achieve liberation while living in this life. In Lingayatism there are no classes of souls as in Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism is other-worldly in out-look in that liberated souls reside with God in Vaikuntha. Lingayatism is quite opposed to this tendency. Lingayatism is much interested in

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\*History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion: Prof. M R Sakhare

solving the problems of this world. In fact it strives to make this world a heavenly and happy place. Its socio-ethics and economics revolutionised the then existing social order. In Vaishnavism God is the Lord of Karma. Individuals entirely depend upon God for their activity. The law of Karma expresses the will of God. But in the Lingayat religion the doctrine of Karma has no place. The Lingayat way is quite different from the Hindu orthodox way of Jnana, Bhakti and Karma. It is beyond the traditional paths. It is not a Bhakti cult movement as is Vaishnavism; nor is it a Jnanamarga as is Shankar's Vedanta; nor does it advocate the doctrine of Karma as does a *Mimamsaka*. It is an independent marga which is not circumscribed by traditionalism. It is a Shatsthalamarga—six-staged path. A Lingayat Sharana, Shiddharama, opines:

If I regard myself as a body, I become a Karmakani (A door of Karma); if I offer my services to God, then I will be a Bhaktikandi (a devotee); and if I regard myself as a witness to all Karmas, then I will be a Jnanakandi (a man of knowledge). But show me that universal Almighty who is beyond the trikanda ( Karma, Bhakti and Jnana ), my lord Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna.

Further Lingayat Sharanas were lovers of freedom. They were free thinkers. They hold that a Sharana surpasses the ways of dualism (dvaita), monism (advaita), dualistic monism, etc.



I am not a monist(advaiti) who is free from the pride of consciousness that he is himself that perfect blissful Parabrahman; nor am a dualist ( dvaiti ) who is involved in the mess of seeking after truth keeping the dualistic basis. Your Sharanas alone know the impregnable universal God who has liquidated both dvaita and advaita, my Lord Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna.

Though he has no bodily form, yet he has some form; conversely though he has a bodily form, yet he is formless. He is not a dualist (dvaiti) because he has removed from his mind the duality of master and servant. Nor is he a monist (advaiti) as he has done away with the mental disease of 'I am not that' 'who am I?' and 'I am He' ( *Naham, Koham and Soham*). Freed from all this infatuation, your Sharana, Channabasava, is in that great Divinity, Siddhasomalinga.

A Sharana is not a dualist because he does not take to the path of a Kriyavant. He is not a monist since he does not go the way of a Jnani who holds the view of liberation through Jnana. He does not hanker after heaven (swarga) as the advocates of Bhakti cult do, because he wants to make

this world a heaven. He seeks the means of realization in Kudalachannasangayya.

Lastly, Vaishnavism accepts the authority of the Veda, Smriti, Agama etc. Hence it smacks of Brahmanism and authoritarianism. It draws inspiration from the orthodox scriptures. It advocates temple-religion. The Lingayat way of abolishing the Varnashramadharma is quite distinct and systematic. It did away with the Brahmin priestly class which had controlled the temple institutions. Ramanuja simply allowed the lower castes to enter temples. But he did not remove the temple heads who were exploiting the masses in the name of God. But Basava freed the people from the clutches of the temple priests by propounding a 'Lingangi' doctrine. To Basava, body itself was a temple. If according to Ramanuja the Sudras were allowed free access to the temple deity, the priests will be at an advantage, because they will be asking for gifts to the deity from the Sudras and will get more money. But Basava saw the root of the matter and uprooted it. That is why Lingayat movement is a social revolution. Lingayatism does not believe in Avataras. Thereby, authoritarianism will accrue. In this respect Vaishnavism breeds the Gita tendency.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### **BHAGAVAD GITA AND LINGAYATISM**

*The Lingayat way is not the way of the Veda and Shastra, nor is it the path of Gita. Note that all these are verbose: They resort to wordy duels. But the Sharanas of Kudala Sanga are serious dialecticians.*

—Lorb Basava.

There is a tendency among Kannada writers and speakers to identify *in toto* the teachings of Gita with those of the Lingayat Vachana Shastra. But Basava warns against such loose tendencies. The Brahmanic literature—Veda, Shastra, Shruti and Smriti—had its own religion, philosophy, economics, sociology etc. The Lingayat Vachana Shastra had its own too. The old Conservative and reactionary order was Brahmanism, whereas progressive and forward-looking was the Lingayat Movement. So that Lingayatism contrasts itself from Gita. Certainly Gita condenses in itself the orthodox Brahmanic thought and literature in a cautious manner. Vachana Shatra too analyses carefully the then current thoughts and trends expressed in the Gita and the Shastra. The Sharanas were not interested in the wordy duels of the Brahmin Pandits. They were quite serious and sincere about the new orientation of the then existent philosophy of life. Hence Lingayat philosophy differs from the Gita view.

First, the tone of Gita itself smacks of dictatorship. Lord Krishna states that he is present everywhere, he reveals his ' Universal form ' to Arjuna. In fact Gita is a dialogue between a master and a servant, where the former dictates to the latter. Krishna assures us that he will be born on earth off and on whenever the Vedic religion with its Varnashramadharma is in danger. Hence the theory of reincarnation is the dogma of Gita. And the doctrine of Karma is its accompaniment.

“ Another important feature of the Gita doctrine of devotion consists in the fact that the transcendent God is not only immanent in the Universe but also present before the devotee in the form of a great deity resplendent with brightness, or in the personal form of the man-god Krishna in whom God incarnated Himself. The Gita combines together different conceptions of God without feeling the necessity of reconciling the oppositions or contradictions involved in them. It does not seem to be aware of the philosophical difficulty of combining the concept of God as the unmanifested, differenceless entity with the notion of Him as the super-person who incarnates Himself on earth in the human form and behaves in the human manner. It is not aware of the difficulty that, if all good and evil should have emanated from God, and if there be ultimately no moral responsibility, and if every thing in the world should have the same place in God, there is no reason why God should trouble to incarnate Himself as man,

when there is a disturbance of the Vedic Dharma. If God is impartial and if he is absolutely unperturbed, why should he favour the man who clings to Him and why, for his sake, over-rule the world order of events and in his favour suspend the law of Karma? It is only by constant endeavours and practice that one can cut asunder the bonds of Karma. Why should it be so easy for even a wicked man who clings to God to release himself from the bonds of attachment and Karma, without any effort on his part? Again the Gita does not attempt to reconcile the disparate parts which constitute the complex super-personality of God. How are the unmanifested or the *Avyakṛta* part as Brahma, the *Avyakṛta* part of the cosmic substratum of the universe, the *prakṛiti* part as the producer of the gunas, and the *prakṛiti* part as the Jivas or individual selves, to be combined and melted together to form a complex personality? If the unmanifested nature is the ultimate abode of God, how can God as a person who cannot be regarded as a manifestation of this ultimate reality, be considered to be transcendent? How can there be a relation between God as a person and His diverse nature as the cosmic universe, jiva the Gunas? ”†

Secondly, the Gita bases its social structure on the old Vedic Varnashramadharma. Krishna takes pride in re-installing it. In fact he says: ‘I have created the four-fold caste system on the merit and capacity is final.

†History of Indian Philosophy Vol. II: Dr. Dasagupta, M. A., Ph. D.

—on the merit and capacity of an individual.' God Shri Krishna, the superman, created the caste system. His authority is final. God imposes the system upon the people. God's motive may be good. But the right of the individual's choice of a profession or occupation is exercised by a superman namely God. Hence the doctrine leads to divine dictatorship. The initiative of the individual is annulled thereby. Since society is divided by divinity, the system becomes compartmental. Consequently, the castes at the helm of the State and Society begin to oppress the lower castes. Brahmins think it their divine duty to exact more money and land in the form of gifts to the temple deity from the lower caste people, because God has ordered them to do so. Similarly Kshatriyas begin to tax and tyrannise the people, because the Almighty has ordained them to do so. They think that they are kings by divine right. Slaves will remain slaves and masters will remain masters throughout their lives. As a result the caste system becomes hereditary which curbs the development of individuality and society. Such social philosophy kills the soul of a nation. The nation becomes backward and barbarous. The development of art, science, literature etc. will be hampered. In short the progress of a nation is hindered.

Again, the caste duties will conflict with common duties (Sadharana dharmas) like non-violence, truthfulness, forgiveness, self-control etc. The common duty of a man is not to kill or do harm to any one. But the caste duty of a Kshatriya is to kill a person in the battle. Which duty should be pursued? True to the Vedic tradition Gita gives preference to the caste duty. So the

caste system over-rules the common duty. According to the Gita view the caste system is superior to common rational ethics. Consequently, the Kantian categorical imperatives like 'Duty for duty's sake', 'Speak the truth even though the heavens fall' and 'Good will shines like a jewel by its own light'; and Mahatma Gandhi's maxims like 'Do or die' are corollaries of the Gita caste morality.

"Gita adopts the caste system based on characteristic qualities and specific duties. But there are common duties ( Sadharana dharmas ) forgiveness, self-control, truthfulness, devotion to Vedic Gods, purity etc. .... Krishna persuades Arjuna to kill and fight with his kinsmen, though non-injury to animals is one of the common duties. ... The fundamental teaching of Gita is to follow caste duties without any motive of self-interest or the gratification of sense-desires. The other general duties of sacrifice, 'tapas' and gifts are also to be practised by all. But if caste duties come into conflict with the special duties of non-injury (ahimsa), then the caste duties are to be followed in preference. .... A Sudra should not think of studying Veda or doing sacrifice. Thus though non-injury is one of specific virtues enjoined by Gita, yet when a Kshatriya kills enemies in the fight, that fight is itself to be regarded as virtuous and there is for Kshatriya no sin in the killing of his enemies."\*

\*History of Indian Philosophy Vol. II: Dr. Dasagupta, M. A., Ph. D.

Gita teaches that one should do one's duty irrespective of its fruit. One should not expect the fruit of labour. Duty should be done for duty's sake. One should develop the spirit of *tyaga*—renunciation—non-attachment to the fruit of action. A Sudra should not expect remuneration in return for his labour. Thereby the masses will be tightly held in chain socially and economically. The upper classes will have freedom to exploit the masses in various ways. Since God Krishna has propounded this doctrine, all must obey willy-nilly. The upperclass will get the divine right of ruling the people socially and economically in the name of Almighty. This is the socio-economics of Gita.

Further, Krishna urges Arjuna to fight: 'If you conquer you will get Kingdom; if you die you will attain Heaven.' Here Krishna talks about the fruit of action. Logically Krishna means to express that Arjuna should fight in anticipation of getting kingdom or heaven. This statement contradicts the above doctrine of non-attachment to the fruit of duty. Such contradictions are found in the Gita. Gita preaches other-worldliness. A Kshatriya will go to heaven if he dies fighting in the battle. Lastly, the Gita does not consistently co-ordinate the stages of devotion, duty and knowledge ( Bhakti, Karma and Jnana ). While dealing with Karma, the Gita delineates it to the exclusion of Bhakti and Jnana. When extolling Bhakti, the Gita exalts it above Karma and Jnana. So that relations among Bhakti, Jnana and Karma are not explained at all, 'It is from the point of view of mystic



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consciousness that the Gita seems to reconcile the apparently philosophically irreconcilable elements. The Gita was probably written at a time when philosophical views were not definitely crystallised into hard and fast systems of thought. Gita is therefore not a properly schemed system of philosophy.'

But in Lingayatism we have altogether a different picture. Firstly the motive of the Lingayat Movement is democratic. It is a social revolution. By exploding the Varnashrama-Dharma it paves the way to the Indian reformation. It does not set up the theory of reincarnation and rebirth. Hence it is not a religion of Avatars and Puranas. It does not advocate the superman theory of Gita. By conceding to the individual his right of freedom, the Lingayat Movement becomes democratic. The contradictions in the Gita about the relation between man and superman, nature and God do not arise in the Lingayat philosophy. The problem of evil and inequality is removed by the abolition of the Varnashrama-dharma which was responsible for the untold miseries and agonies in society. Hence the Lingayat conception of God is free from the taint of evil and inequality. By removing the Brahmanic priest-craft Basava made direct access to Divinity. Humanity was face to face with Divinity. The background of Lingayatism was humanism—to free man from the shackles of social and religious slavery. Basava did not compartmentalise society into castes and creeds as did Krishna. Regarding the choice of profession or occupation Basava gave initiative to the individual but

not to the supreme deity. Hence Lingayatism goes to the root of man. Any man is free to pursue any profession he likes. He is free to change it if it is not suitable to him. Basava clarifies the point:

A man becomes a blacksmith by heating iron; he becomes a washerman by washing clothes; he becomes a Brahmin by reading Vedas. Are there people who are born of a ear in the world? Therefore, Lord Kudala Sangam, he is a man of religion who knows the Linga.

According to Basava, there is only one caste of Lingayats—those who are devoted to Linga or God. This is the humanistic background of the Lingayat religion. The humanity which regards the body as the temple of Divinity is a *Lingangi* community.

When the caste system itself is thrown overboard then there does not arise any conflict between caste duties and common duties. Keeping in mind the ideal of human good, a Lingayat is free to carve his own career. The question of non-attachment to the fruit of duty does not arise in the Lingayat society. The right for the fruit of labour is recognized in the Lingayat socio-economics. All must work; idlers are punished. A man should earn just enough for his maintenance. So when the right of the individual for the minimum maintenance is conceded, the question about the expectation of the fruit of labour naturally falls through. When the exploiting class of

Brahmin priests was exploded, then the national wealth would be equitably distributed among the exploited mass of devotees. A Sharana explains:

Mind should be pure and clear in doing good, holy deeds. We should do our daily work which fetches fixed wages. If we hanker after wealth and gold discarding the fixed wages, our service will be destructive. But my service to you is quite sincere, O Chandeswar Linga.

The Lingayat religion is not other-worldly. It does not posit the existence of heaven and hell. On the other hand it is worldly in the sense that it attempts to make a heaven of this mortal existence-to reform humanity through divinity. Further the relation between Karma, Bhakti and Jnana is clarified in the Lingayat Shatsthala Shasta. (Vide chapter on Ethics of Lingayatism). Sociologically Lingayatism supersedes the Vedic *Chaturvarna-dharma* i.e. the fourfold caste system; whereas metaphysically it surpasses the Vedic *Triṣaṇḍa-Marga*, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. On the other hand, it sets up the *Shatsthala-marga* for the attainment of *Lingangasamarashya*. Shiddharama, a Lingayat Sharana, clarifies the issue in the following Vachana:

If I regard myself as a body, I become a Karmakandi, (a door of Karma); if I offer my services to God, then I will be a Bhaktikandi (a devotee); and if I regard myself as

a witness to all Karmas, then I will be called a Jnanakandi (a man of knowledge). But show me that universal Almighty who is beyond the Trikanda (Karma, Bhakti and Jnana), my Lord Kapila-siddha Mallikarjuna.

Finally, with its zeal for reform the Lingayat movement ushers in an era of reformation, thus paving the way to the twentieth century democracy. It is a *via media* between Mediaevalism and Modernism—an important mile-stone leading to the philosophic humanism of the present century. This tendency is markedly absent in the much praised and boosted book of Bhagavad-Gita.

“The verse near the beginning wherein Arjuna is exhorted to fight in order to avoid (at any rate) disgrace (II. 34) is, on the face of it, opposed to those later ones (II. 47 etc) in which we find inculcated the disinterested performance of one's duty. Though this may be called hyper-criticism, I mention it as a likely objection. There are also many verses in the Gita (VI. 13) ‘by looking at the tip of one's nose’, prescribing mere physical exercises and laying down dietetic rules, which seem to have no bearing on spiritual life as such or (at least) to carry no particular significance spiritually. Lastly, it should not be surprising if verses 47 and 48 of Ch. XVIII were used in defence of hereditary (Sahaja) Criminals like Thuggee”.\*

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\* Ramarajya: S. D. Nadakarni

Pandit Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi, an eminent Indian philosopher, and author of 'Encyclopædia of Religion' ( *Sarvadharma Kosha* in Marathi ) diagnoses the ancient Indian society in his article 'Verdict on Nationalism':

" Sociologically, the Hindu society never encouraged even within itself any sense of inter-dependence, unity or cohesion. On the other hand, isolationism, a rigorous subordination of lower castes to higher castes, mutual contempt, rituals that bred hatred and suspicion—all these were wholly tolerated. Never in history was India one united nation before the British intervened. The Indian social life contains more of the elements that foster an acute sense of cultural and religious difference than of those that make for cohesion. Not only the ideas about the other world, or the religious rituals, but whole categories of social behaviour separate the Hindu from the Muslim. The difference between the Sprishya and the Asprishya is not merely a matter of touchability or untouchability; it is the difference between classes who played the role of age-long oppressors and those doomed to the depths of social degradation for centuries past. Untouchability is not the cause of this social degradation; it is the symptom of a deep-seated social disease. Even the social relations between the Marathas and the Brahmins do not symbolise fraternity. They conceal a sense of isolation and subordination. Hinduism is not conducive to social unity. It makes for isolation, subordination, conflict and discord.

“ The past of Hinduism is darkened by this cruel subjugation and hopeless conflict. The unjust social differences are never forgotten and the urge for humane-ness is never even voiced. The Vedas spell decisively and irrevocably undiluted slavery for the Shudras and the Dashyas, totally three-fourth of the Hindu Society. Manu, Yajnyavalkya and other Smritis, which are the Hindu Codes of law, glorify shameless injustice as the real justice. The Brahmins are exempted from capital punishment, while the non-Brahmins can never hope for exemption, however weighty the considerations. The Gita carries forward the basic principles set forth in the Vedas and Smritis and it is from this Gita that our Tilakas and Gandhis draw their inspiration.”\*

Lord Basava concludes the controversy in his Vachana:

*Are the advocates of the Veda and Shastra  
great ?*

*Are the mentally diseased and deceived apo-  
stles of Gita superior ?*

- *All those ‘great’ men resort to Vedic rituals.  
But let us follow the way by which the Sha-  
ranas of our Kudalasangama have achieved  
learning, knowledge, religion, philosophy  
and morality.*

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\*Independent India: Vol. VIII, No. 48

## CHAPTER XIX

### ISLAM AND LINGAYATISM

Islam, the Religion of Peace, was not the creation of Mohammad any more than other religions were of those to whom their origins are respectively attributed. No religion is the creation of any single individual, nor does it appear all of a sudden, revealed to this or that Seer as it is always claimed. Islam, like any other religion, was the product of conditions of the time, and the surroundings in which it flourished.

The severe monotheism of Mohammad not only echoed the yearning for unity on the part of a people torn asunder by internecine feuds; it was also destined to find a ready response from the neighbouring nations, tormented by the intolerance of the Catholic Church. The religious life of the people of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt had been hopelessly confused by the conflicts of Magian Mysticism, Jewish Conservatism and Christian bigotry. Rigid rites and rituals had taken the place of religion; hypocritical ceremonies had driven away devotion; dogmatic theology had prosecuted faith; and God had disappeared in a confusing crowd of angels, saints and apostles. The stringent cry of the new religion—'There is but one God'—softened by great toleration, subject to this fundamental creed, was enthusiastically hailed by the distressed multitudes searching for the secure anchor of a simple faith in the

stormy sea of social disintegration, intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual chaos. The historic cry was raised by the caravan traders of Arabia who had stood outside the ruinous conflict of arms and beliefs, had prospered economically, and progressed in spirit, while their older and more civilized neighbours had stagnated, decayed and disintegrated. The propagation of the stern belief in the One-ness of God prepared the ground for the rise of a military State which unified all the social functions—religious, civil, judicial and administrative. The unitarianism of the Saracens laid the foundation of a new social order which rose magnificently out of the ruins of the antique civilization. Such creed was sure to attract the attention of the multitudes barbarously persecuted for religious heterodoxy. The new faith allowed freedom of conscience to all who placed themselves under its protection. Islam rose as a protection against religious persecution and refuge for the oppressed.

The accommodating nature, cosmopolitan spirit, democratic policy and the monotheistic creed of Islam were the creation of the geographical position of the land of its birth. Surrounded with countries oppressed by native despotism or devastated by foreign invasions, Arabia maintained her freedom. The persecuted sects from Egypt and Persia as well as from Christendom fled to the free and hospitable desert where they could profess what they thought, and practise what they professed.

Gnosticism and Manichaeism—those hybrids of oriental mystic cults—Greek metaphysics and Christian Gospel



all thrived luxuriantly on the sandy soil of free Arabia. Finally Catholic orthodoxy drove to the same smelting pot of Arabian hospitality the Nestorian, Jacobite and Eutycian heretics who preferred the simplicity of the Gospel to the idolatry of the orthodox Church. The freedom of exile brought the representatives of those diverse faiths into closer contact enabling them to see what was common to them all. In the calm atmosphere of toleration, their heterodoxy disappeared, fire of proselytism died out, and the common essence of the teachings of the learned guest was imparted to the hospitable Beduin. In short, the barbarians of the desert inherited the best the religions of antiquity had to offer, namely, the faith in the existence of one supreme God who is exalted above all the powers of heaven and earth, but who had revealed himself to the mankind from time to time through his Prophets. Here is the essence of Islam crystallised in the spiritual consciousness of the Arabian people before Mohammad appeared with the mission of building a new religion on its basis. The spirit of Islam was not invented by the genius of Mohammad; nor was it revealed to him. It was a heritage of history conferred on the Arabian nation. The greatness of Mohammad was his ability to recognize the value of the heritage and make his countrymen conscious of it.

Having conceived the ideal of national unity, Mohammad realised that it could not be made acceptable to the warring Arabian tribes unless it were backed

up with a supernatural sanction. People enjoying the bliss of ignorance and thinking in terms of pre-conceived notions, could not be convinced with any other argument. The will of minor Gods could be over-whelmed by the will of a great and all-powerful God. The protection against the wrath of the former should be found in the mercy of the latter. The belief in the absolute sway of one supreme God can alone encourage people to revolt against the tyranny of a whole host of tribal deities. If the supreme God was not there, he had to be invented. That was the chain of Mohammad's thoughts.

Monotheism, however, is a highly subversive theory. While being itself the highest form of religion, it strikes at the root of religious mode of thought. Placing God above and beyond the world, it opens up the possibility of doing without Him altogether. Islam as the most rigorous monotheistic religion closed the chapter of human history dominated by the religious mode of thought, and by its very nature was open to unorthodox interpretations, which eventually liquidated the religious mode of thought and laid down the foundation of modern rationalism.\*

“We may compare the working of monotheism to a mighty lake which gathers the floods of science together, until they suddenly begin to break through

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\* Preceding paragraphs are extracts from “Historical Role of Islam”.  
M. N. Roy. The author is indebted to Roy.

the dam.....The third of great monotheistic religions Mohammadanism, is more favourable to materialism. This, the youngest of them, was also the first to develop, in connection with the brilliant out-burst of Arabian civilization, a free philosophical spirit, which exercised a powerful influence primarily upon the Jews in the middle ages and so indirectly upon the Christians of the west.”\*

The ideal of Islam was a brotherhood of the whole of humanity, binding man to man and nation to nation. The doctrine that each man will be judged by his works was a decided advance on the early doctrines that the gods should be propitiated by sacrifice or by mere belief in the efficacy of a sacrifice, either animal, human, or divine. His salvation depended upon his labours, on his acts and thoughts. Islam heralded liberty of conscience for all. ‘Let there be no violence in religion. It is yours to preach’ says the Prophet. It put an end forever to the doctrine that there was one standard of morals for the individuals and another for the nation or state. The State and the individual should be judged by the same measuring-rod.

Lastly Mr. J. Parkison in his article ‘Muhammad: A Social Reformer’ deals with the economic and the political aspects of Islam:

“Two aspects of the Prophet’s teaching ought to appeal to every modern socialist. The first is forbidd-

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\*The History of Materialism: Vol-1 F. A. Lange

ing 'Usury'. The hoarding up of the money so as to lay it out at interest and live on it without labour was interdicted. Every Muslim must work for his own sustenance. Such a law made for the more equal distribution of wealth. It saved the many from becoming paupers and the few millionaires. The Khalifa Umar so far recognized this teaching of his master that he refused to keep a surplus in the state treasury and distributed what was over every Friday to the people according to their needs. The second aspect: Prophet forbade 'cornering', the creation of a monopoly in any of the foodstuffs of the people by which prices might be raised and the poorer portion suffer. The introduction of some of the laws of Islam in the British Isles at the present time would relieve the cares of many a housewife.

"The political aspect of Islam never seems to have been clearly grasped by the great mass of Europeans. Politically Islam is a Brotherhood, and therefore a Democracy. The meanest subject of a Muslim State has the same right to be heard on a question affecting the State or the religion as the ruler of the State himself. Under Islam all are equal. The prophet left no hard-and-fast rule as to the title of the supreme head of a Muslim State, or as to whether that head was to be one man or a body of men. That point was in the hands of the people themselves—the *Ijima* or agreement of the Muslims. They could appoint a king, a Sultan, a President

or a Council -----It was the duty of the head to safeguard the interests of the State internally and externally according to the laws of Islam."

Thus we find all those who hoard up wealth and don't spend it in the way God has ordained, being warned of their painful doom. But the wealth should be spent in the way of God who then rewards us. The same is implied in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

"O ye who believe, most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely ( wantonly ) and turn them from the way of God; and(as for)those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God, unto them give tidings of a painful doom.

Those who spend their wealth for the cause of God and afterwards make not reproach or injury, follow that which they have spent, their reward is with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve."†

The brief sketch shows how analogous in ideology are both Islam and Lingayatism. Both were monotheistic, pregnant with materialistic potentialities. Like Islam Lingayatism rose under the polytheistic firmament of Brahmanic Hinduism. Vedic ritualism and polytheism, Agamic idolatry and priest-craft were rampant. Shankar's Aupanishadic monotheism had the Vedic polytheism as its basis. It was a hybrid cult.

† The Holy Quran: 9:34 & 2:262

Hence it was shaky. Basava shook the foundation of that fabric and consequently propounded a consistent monotheism. Not only were the Vedic polytheism and the Agamic idolatry condemned but the dubious monotheism of Shankar was done away with. Basava's mission as that of Mohammad was to co-ordinate and unify the disintegrating and degenerating forces of humanity purging them of their pestilence. The reactionary features of the Brahmanic religion were revealed to the people. The dangerous tendencies implied in the orthodox religions were fully exposed to the public. Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism and even Shaivism had exhausted their progressive potentialities. They had out-lived their utility. Hence the Lingayat movement rose as a revolt against those religions. Freedom of conscience was the basis of the movement. The spirit of inquiry was its starting point.

But what is the distinction between Islamic monotheism and Lingayat monotheism. The monotheism of Islam is rather deistic in that it places God above and beyond the world. But the Lingayat monotheism is biassed by pantheism-God pervades the whole universe. God is associated with the world. Shiva and Shakti, divinity and humanity are inextricably interwoven. Immanence of the Divine is more prominent than its transcendence. Hence materialism is covert in the Lingayat monotheism, whereas in the Islamic type it is overt, as divinity is transcendental rather than immanent. But this aspect of Islam smacks of other-worldliness. To capture the imagination of the people Mohammad gives

vivid descriptions of Heaven and awe-inspiring pictures of Hell. "Heaven", he said "would be the blissful abode of the righteous, and the tortures of the Hell would be the miserable lot of sinners. In Heaven there would be fragrant gardens and vine-yards, but in Hell there would be boiling water and fires that would burn the bones to ashes." But Lingayatism renounces other-worldliness and enthuses us to make a heaven of this world. Man can make this world a happy heaven by becoming pure in thought, word and deed. But both Islam and Lingayatism cut at the root of orthodox mode of thought and hence lay the foundation of modern rationalism. The theological aspect of both begins to lose ground in the face of materialistic philosophy buttressed with the scientific back-ground. The same spirit of inquiry as had questioned the authority of old religions begins to question the authenticity and utility of these new religions when new philosophic systems come into being in response to the rapid advance of science. Consequently philosophy once religious becomes scientific. But the spirit of inquiry or the freedom of thought should be kept ever fresh and working. This is the secret of progress which leads to peace and prosperity.

There are no two opinions regarding the social, economic and political aspects of both Islam and Lingayatism. Basava, like Mohammad, had a message to give, of liberty, equality and fraternity of humanity. Indeed the Lingayat movement was a revolt against the Varnashramadharma. The economic principle of Islam

is found in Lingayatism. Lingayatism insists that a man should not earn more than he needs. Hence the needs of the individual should be taken into account. Each must work according to his needs. Islam preaches that if there is hoarded wealth, it should be given in charity to the poor people. But Lingayatism proceeds further and lays down that the hoarded wealth should not be given in charity; thereby beggary is encouraged. A Sharana should spend, that day, whatever he earns. The next day, he must work and eat. We must keep our body and mind active and agile by doing our daily work manual or mental. Hence the Lingayat Kalyan State which implies a happy State was marked by freedom from exploitation of any kind:

*Milk may flow in streams  
Or spring from the back of the cow, it isn't mine,  
Why touch the treasure of Bijjala  
When I have Thy favour Oh Kudalasangama !*

*In whom there's no element of lust,  
Who never hunts after gold and hates it ever,  
And whoever leaves his bed ere it dawns,  
My humble bow to him, he is a Sharana.  
I follow him as a dog his master does,  
My Lord Kudalasangama.*

—Lord Basava.



## CHAPTER XX

### **SIKHISM AND LINGAYATISM.**

When Shivaji was celebrating the establishment of a Hindu sovereignty in Maharastra with the aid of orthodox Brahmin priests from Benares, events of far-reaching importance were taking place in the north-west of India, where a national awakening similar to that of the Deccan was approaching fulfilment in the creation of a nation of patriots, warriors and martyrs out of the humble peasants and rude hill-tribes, who were groaning under the oppression of the Moghal rule and sinking into ignorance and lifelessness under the deadening influences of caste and idolatry. Guru Govind, the tenth from Guru Nanak, became the head of the Sikhs in 1675 and organised his followers not like Shivaji in absolute disregard of the popular aspirations, but for the preservation of those high ideals which have ever been the inspiration of India's National life and the invariable teachings of her Prophets and Saints.

It was, however, reserved for Guru Nanak to become the founder of a new order of things, a new nation free from many of the foibles and superstitions of the Hindus of those days. He taught that God should be worshipped as the One Supreme Invisible Being and that salvation lay in a life of virtue, purity and good works, and implicit faith in and surrender to God. He denied that it was necessary to give up the ordinary life of the world in

order to attain peace here and liberation hereafter, and set the example by resuming the house-holder's life after many years of renunciation, austerities and wandering which did not lead to any real good. His teachings appealed to Hindus and Mohammadans alike, and both the communities regarded him as an inspired teacher. He was followed by a line of nine other Gurus of whom Guru Govind was the last. He gave the Sikhs a religious, social and political constitution which has served to hold them together as a united community ever since. As in the case of Shivaji, whom the priests succeeded in persuading that he was a special vehicle of the goddess Bhavani, so was an attempt made to impose upon Guru Govind the authority of the goddess Kali. A human sacrifice is said to have been performed with the help of Brahmins from Benares. Anyhow, it happily failed to impress the honest and fearless heart of the great leader who but for this would have dedicated his followers and kingdom to priest-craft and idolatry instead of raising them from their degradation. The Guru refused to be victimised. As he said in his dying address, he preferred to attach his followers to the skirt of the immortal God, and entrusted them to Him only, and called upon every one of them, 'ever to remain under His protection and trust no one besides.'

The chief articles of faith and discipline of the Sikhs are: (1) They must believe only in the One Immortal God. (2) They must not worship idols, cemeteries, trees or spirits. (3) They must ever help the poor and

protect those who sought their protection. (4) They must have no distinction of caste or class or profession and must deem themselves members of one family. (5) They must practise the use of arms, must wear arms constantly, must never flee before an enemy, and must be prepared to die for the cause of truth and justice. (6) They must lead a pure life of chastity, moderation, discipline, benevolent actions and dedication to God and the Nation. (7) The Central Committee called the Khalsa was to be the final authority in all matters. (8) The teachings of the ten Gurus embodied in the *Grantha* was to be their religious text. (9) Any five Sikhs could meet and give initiation to others and take them into the fold. (10) Women were to have all the consolations of religion which men enjoyed. (11) Every one was to live by honest labour and shun the company of idlers and wicked men. (12) As a sign of the new life they had entered, all Sikhs were to be known as Singhs (lions).

In a short time, 80,000 men became his followers and the number went on increasing. A large number of Brahmins and other twice-born Hindus deserted the Sikhfold when he insisted on the observances of these disciplines. Guru Govind welcomed the departure of the incorrigibles who clung to their own customs and castes, and in their place, admitted thousands of the humble peasants and hill tribes who were thus enabled to realise their manhood, and become the respectable citizens of the Khalsa State.\*

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\*Preceding paragraphs are extracts from 'Menace of Hindu Imperialism': Dharma Thirtha Swami. The author is much indebted to Swamiji.

"Govind Singh thus appealed to the eternal instincts of equality, liberty and brotherhood, broke forever the caste prejudices and received into the Khalsa people of all classes who had hitherto been debarred from bearing arms and participating in religion. The Singhs of the Khalsa felt themselves at once elevated and equal to the proud and martial Rajputs. Personal pride and strength were infused into them, and Sikhism knitted them together into one common brotherhood, animated by a common faith, one social life and national longing. The effect of these new teachings, it is said, was immediate and profound. The Sikhs began to manifest great chivalry and courage and live in sweet social love and harmony among themselves. Wherever there was oppression or cruelty, the Sikhs were there, and with ready heart and brave arms, helped the persecuted. Among themselves, they lived like brothers, they used to feed one another, shampoo one another when tired, bathe one another, wash one another's clothes, and one Sikh always met another with a smile on his face and love in his heart".\*

Guru Nanak caught the spirit of the age and perceived the correct lines of regeneration and unification of the people. Guru Govind built upon the foundations so nobly laid an enduring nationality. He infused a new enthusiasm for freedom, democracy, righteousness and self-sacrifice into the minds of a vanquished people, he

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\*Guru Govind: G. A. Natesan & Co.

roused their native potentialities which lay dormant under the killing weight of Moghal despotism and the social ignominy of Hinduism, he filled their humble lives with a glorious yearning to live and die for the sake of truth, righteousness and courtesy, he restored to them their natural simplicity of beliefs and customs from the degradation and corruption which surrounded them, and kindled an inextinguishable passion for brave deeds, all of which made the Sikhs a distinct people, a model and inspiration to the lowly and oppressed of all times, and a memorable contrast to the Brahmin empire of Maharastra.

Sikhism arose as a reaction to Hinduism and developed in response to Islam. Broad principles of Islam influenced Kabir and Nanak; they therefore propounded a new doctrine of Sikhism by incorporating them into it. Similarly Lingayatism appeared on the scene as a revolt against the then existing religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Vaishnavism. Lingayatism was as monotheistic and heroic as Sikhism; but it was more revolutionary in that it emphasized not only the physical aspect but cultural and spiritual aspects also. It was a more comprehensive movement dealing with the development of all aspects of humanity. The following are the tenets of Lingayatism:—

(1) God is one and He is Shiva. Through His energy called Shakti, he creates the world. Its position in philosophy is that of energy qualified monism. This energy is constant, neither increasing nor diminishing.

(2) Matter is indestructible as it is created by God. So the world is real. (3) Every devotee should aim at being united with God or find *Samarasya*. (4) All Lingayats are equal. (5) Devotion ( Bhakti ) combined with knowledge ( Jnana ) and right action ( Sat-Karma ) is the means of realising divinity. (6) Every devotee should surrender all his possessions including his body and life if need be, to God and the Sharanas. This is called *Dasoham*. (7) Egotism and all other evil tendencies must be banished from the mind. Senses should not be suppressed but sublimated by channelling them to the human good. (8) Love towards God and all living beings is the basis of religion. (9) A devotee should act righteously. He should abstain from spirituous drinks (*Somarasa*), flesh eating, harming living beings, fornication and theft. He should be pure in thought, speech and action. This is called *Sadachara*. (10) He should ever defend truth, justice and religion. This is called *Ganachara*-the Lingayat Guard-whose function is to defend the people against reactionaries. The heroic aspect of Sikhism is expressed in this Lingayat Guard. (11) He should follow a profession to maintain himself. (12) He should regard every one who wears Linga as God. Even if he be an untouchable he should be regarded as an equal because he has gone through the act of purification and has been a follower of Lingayatism. This is called *Shivachara*. (13) He should worship Linga with a firm devotion. This is called *Lingachara*:

*Let what's due tomorrow come today,  
I don't fear or feel for that.  
A being born must one day die.  
Who can transgress Thy will,  
Lord Kudalasangama.*

*Tho' dwelling under an humble thatch,  
Magnanimous is the heart of a Sharana;  
Purity flows in every touch of his,  
And bravery throbs in every limb.  
Alas ! So poor, so meek he is !  
How free and independent his way ! Oh,  
Kudalasangama.*

*An elephant is afraid of the goad.  
Bijjala ! I fear him not.  
But my humble bow unto thee !  
For thou art kind to animal creation,  
My Lord Kudalasangama.*

—Lord Basava.

## CHAPTER XXI

### **CHRISTIANITY AND LINGAYATISM**

According to Mark, the public career of Jesus was swift and short. There was a period of popularity and of expectant enthusiasm on the part of the common people of Galilee, the home-province of Jesus and most of his apostles. This was a period of diffusive, extensive sowing of the word of the Gospel, Jesus going about all the towns and villages of Galilee and preaching with acceptance in the Jewish synagogues. But this was followed by a period of growing opposition, accredited leaders of the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem,—following him about to find flaws in his teaching. They had not long to search, for Jesus' teaching was radical and revolutionary in the extreme. It went beyond the externalities of Pharisaic teaching to the heart of real religion in the conscience of the individual. He set aside man-made customs and regulations, with which the Pharisees had hedged round the Law of God, making its observance burdensome to the common man. Such were their insistence on Sabbath observance, their laws of ceremonial cleanliness, their righteous attitude towards "the Publicans and the Sinners." Jesus swept aside these smaller matters and with unswerving spiritual insight laid stress on the weightier matters of the Law, love to God and love to fellowmen. His teaching he compared to new wine which must find



new wine-skins or else will burst the old bottles. This was new teaching with authority which the guardians of the old found impalatable. So we are told that they conspired with the political authority in Galilee, the government of the corrupt and crafty Herod, to get rid of him. Jesus was no more welcomed in the Jewish synagogues. So we find him preaching on mountain-tops and by the seaside to still huge crowds. But soon the province of Galilee itself became unsafe for him and he had hastily to leave its borders and travel about in the country beyond Tyre and Sidon and in the region of the Decapolis, the Greek cities to the east of Galilee, obviously to avoid capture by Herod's minions. There in retreat and faced with rejection by his own people, Jesus rethought his message and arrived at a new conception of his mission and destiny. He came to believe that he was to be the Messiah of the Jewish people, a Messiah according to his own original conception. At this time he underwent an experience crucial like that at his baptism, an experience that revealed to him the necessity of his death. After that we read that he set his face to go to Jerusalem, there to fulfil his destiny. He passed once again through Galilee, but secretly, for he had determined to reach Jerusalem, "outside which", he said, "it is not meet that a prophet should perish."

Jesus, then, began his public ministry in Galilee soon after the imprisonment of John the Baptist by king Herod. The burden of Jesus' early preaching was the

same as that of John, viz; the immanence of the Kingdom of God and the need of repentance or a change of heart for entry therein to. It was veritably a Gospel or good news to the common people. The Kingdom of God, as we have seen, was the dream of Jewish poet and prophet as well as of the common man. Down their long and chequered career, this was the one hope that had sustained them, the hope of God visiting and redeeming His people, establishing his reign on earth. To many, the majority, it meant political sovereignty, freedom from the hated Roman yoke, the restoration of their ancient Davidic splendour. But to Jesus at this time it had mainly an ethical content. It was good tidings to the poor, healing to the diseased, the recovering of sight to the blind, freedom to the captive. His mind had been moulded by the teachings of great Jewish prophets, those stern advocates of social justice. Had not one of them, Isaiah, said that the only religious observances in which God delighted were feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and breaking of every yoke? It is significant that Jesus in one of his latest parables picturing the last judgment, said that this Law of love, of kindness and humanity towards fellow beings is to be its sole criterion. No wonder the common people heard him gladly.

“ There were for Jesus three stages in the life of man: the unconscious life of the child, the conscious life of the man, and the new life of the member of the Kingdom. In the unconscious life of the child there

was spontaneity and wholeness; in the conscious life of the man there was inhibition and division; in the new life of the member of Kingdom there was spontaneity and wholeness once more. Jesus taught in the fullest sense of the word, the necessity and possibility of rebirth, not in the narrow and sectarian meaning, but with a new positiveness. The later Christian conception of unsleeping war between the soul and the body would have been abhorrent to him. Wholeness and spontaneity—these were marks of the member of the Kingdom.\*

The characteristics of the members of the kingdom set forth in the Beatitudes, which St. Matthew has collected together in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of his gospel:

" Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the sons of God.

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\* Life of Jesus: M. Murry.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are Ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

These are not such moral precepts to be painfully lived up to, as the unforced, natural, characteristics of the child of God. When Jesus says: "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also", he is describing the natural, inevitable behaviour of one who has realized his sonship of the father in heaven, "who sends His rain on the just and the unjust and makes His sun rise on the evil and the good."

Faith in God, an attitude of trust towards God, is central to the teaching of Jesus. He was a Jew who had inherited ardent Jewish belief in a holy and transcendent God. Only this God became for Jesus a loving father, unfailing intimate companion. There is in his thought no belittling of God's holiness or of His morals. God who sees in secret demands the utmost purity of heart—not mere external conformity to formal codes of conduct. The old law of the Jews, the ten commandments, are not abrogated but deepened and made more searching. Failure, evil, proceeds from the heart, consists in evil thoughts, wrong desires, unchaste looks; and it is there that they have to be resisted and overcome. And he knew that the cost of it would be great; but no one

who had seen the beauty of that life of wholeness would count that cost too much. "If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out; for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell." Failure to attain unto the kingdom of God seemed to him a dreadful alternative. Using familiar Jewish allegory, most probably believing in it too, he pictured the faith of those who miss the goal of life as eternal damnation. But the emphasis in his teaching is mainly on the joy of achieving the worth while life and utter worthlessness of every thing else beside it. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul or what shall a man give in exchange of his soul?"

All these and more in the parabolic teaching of Jesus are summed up in the brief and beautiful prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray and which is the great prayer of Christendom:

Our father which art in heaven,  
 Hallowed be Thy name.  
 Thy kingdom come.  
 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth  
 Give us this day our daily bread.  
 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven  
 our debtors.  
 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us  
 from the evil one.

"For" he added, "if we forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if

ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.\*

The brief account of Christianity reveals similarities with Lingayatism. Basava like Jesus had to meet with much opposition—persecution and prosecution—from the whole host of orthodoxy—Brahmins, Vaishnavas and Jains. In fact the Lingayat movement was a revolt against the ballast of traditionalism and conservatism. Lingayatism was as monotheistic as Christianity. But Christian monotheism is deistic in that it advocates the transcendence of God in Heaven. But Lingayat monotheism is pantheistic. Christianity therefore breeds otherworldliness which leads to the cult of *avataaras*. Thereby an individual is rendered an eternal servant of God. But Lingayatism insists upon the equality of individuality and universality, of humanity and divinity. Thus holds Lord Basava:

Every one will think of thee,  
But I'll never crave for thee,  
For, my thinking mind Thou art;

I and Thou are one, Lord Kudalasangama.

Further Lingayatism demands not only the purity of heart as Christianity does, but the clarity of head and hand. The Lingayat culture is a fair combination of heart head and hand—feeling thinking and willing:

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\*Preceding paragraphs on Christianity are extracts from 'Jesus Christ' S. K. George M. A; B. D. The author is much indebted to Mr. George.

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Steal not, kill nothing and speak no lie,  
Away with anger and dislike none;  
Never flatter thyself or censure none;  
This is the path to purity, internal and external;  
It's the sure way to realise God Kudalasangama.

But Christianity in the main is the religion of heart. Hence it demands us 'resist not evil'. But Lingayatism appeals to the head to discriminate between good and evil and takes recourse to rewarding the virtuous and punishing the vicious. Hence the Lingayat social ethics is practicable.

The mission of the Lingayat movement was to establish the Kalyan Raj—a happy state. Basava aimed at making this world a happy heaven:

No distinct world for gods and men.  
Heaven is that where truth prevails,  
And untruth marks the world of men.  
Good conduct makes us divine  
While the bad one is the human stamp,  
Lord Kudalasangama.

Good and evil on thy sweet will rest Oh man,  
Sweet words like 'Sir' will always mean heaven;  
And hell yawns at vulgar words,  
Words sweet and soft are direct steps to  
Kudalasangama.

The Lingayat Sharanas' base their social ethics on philosophy. Without a philosophic or religious background a political state cannot thrive long:

King's rage may simply banish his men,  
Husband's anger may his spouse ruin,  
But Jangama's (Philosopher's) wrath is the end  
of all,

Protect me, Oh Lord Kudalasangama.

As in the Kingdom of God, so in the Kalyan Raj justice rules supreme. Basava's message of equality, liberty and fraternity came as a solace and refuge to the tormented and oppressed masses who were groaning under the yoke of Brahmanism. Hence his words appealed to the impoverished people:

*One who kills animal life is low-born;*

*There is nothing like caste or creed.*

*Sharanas only are high-born,*

*For they wish good to all breathing things,*

*My Lord Kudalasangama.*



## CHAPTER XXII

### ZOROASTRIANISM AND LINGAYATISM

The Persia of Zoroaster's day was polytheistic in religion, the gods and goddesses worshipped being mostly nature deities. Ritualism and sacrifices were common. A certain intoxicating drink, Homa, seems to have been in common use, for Zoroaster in one place deploras this and prays for its extinction:

"When, O Ahura Mazda, when will the nobles turn to righteousness? When shall this filthy evil of drink be uprooted by them, the evil through which the wicked Karpans and evil-minded lords of the land so utterly deceive the people? .....Mazdah utters evil against them, who destroy the life of the ox with shouts of joy ..... Whoever thinks the idols and all those men besides, who think of mischief only, to be base, and distinguishes such people from those who think of the right—his friend, brother or father is Ahura Mazda ..... Of these two ( the agriculturist and the nomad) she (Armaiti, the spirit of earth) chose the pious cultivator, the propagator of life, whom she blessed with the riches produced by the good mind. All that do not till her have no share in the good tidings (i.e., the good effects of agriculture)."<sup>\*</sup>

The worship of diverse deities tended to be highly ritualistic so that as usually happens, the true religion of

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<sup>\*</sup>Yasna 48 10, 32, 14, 45, 11, 31, 10.

a high and pure life was smothered in the coils of mere ritualism. It was the mission of Zoroaster to affirm the high values of life as represented by the triad of *hoomta*, *hookhta*, *huvercshta*, i. e, pure thoughts, pure words, and pure deeds. And how was this to be secured? Only through belief in Ahura Mazda, the God of Righteousness. It was this that he proclaimed with all the fire of a prophet. He says "Therefore perform ye, the commandments, which pronounced by Mazda himself have been given to mankind; for they are a nuisance and perdition to liars, but prosperity to the believer in truth; they are the fountains of happiness."

Further Zoroastrianism is ditheism; it advocates the existence of two parallel Deities, one of good and the other of evil. Ahura Mazda is one, but he has two aspects represented by Spenta Mainyush and Angra Mainyush. Ahura Mazda is identified with Spenta Mainyush as the spirit of goodness so that Angra Mainyush as the spirit of evil falls outside God. There are two creators: one of good things and the other of evil things. Zoroastrian worship centres round fire as the symbol of the pure and the purifying. Thousands of Zoroastrians go to a fire temple with a piece of sandal-wood as their offering. But man's piety is not measured by the quantity of sandalwood he offers but by the purity of mind and heart.

Agriculture is held in high regard in Zoroastrianism. Zoroaster himself in the *Gathas* sings the greatness and nobility of agriculture. In Yasna 31. 9-10 Armaiti is

invoked as the spirit of earth. All that do not till her, but worship devas, have no share in her good tidings (i. e., the fruits produced by her and the blessings of settled life)." In Yasna 33.3 whoever 'furtheres the works of life by tilling the soil' is promised the fields of the righteous and the good. "He who sows the ground with care and diligence acquires a greater stock of merit than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers." So kindness to animals like bulls and cows is a natural corollary. Animal sacrifice is condemned:

"For a long time the Grehma (priests) and the Kavis have been spending all their thought and energy in the slaughter of the ox with shouts of joy, imagining that this would help these followers of falsehood; and they say that the cow is to be sacrificed that favours may be obtained."\*

Zoroastrianism condemns prostitution as it militates against the purity of character. But women are free from the trammels of the *purdah* and the resulting isolation and stunting of life. The religion of Zoroaster revolted against the threefold caste system existing then in Iran or Persia. The Iranian Athravans and Rathestars corresponded to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas among the Hindus, while the third caste comprised the rest of the community consisting of agriculturists and artisans. We find that caste system of Hindus does not exist among the Parsees, the followers of Zoroaster. In Zoroaster we find no exaltation of the priestly class at all. But it

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\*Yasna 32, 12.

is the agriculturist that tended to be exalted and so he never fell so low in the social scale as the poor Sudras in India:

"If co-religionists come here as friends or brothers, craving for wealth (or goods), or for a wife, or for wisdom, then if they come craving for wealth (or goods), they should have wealth carried for them; if for a wife, one should get him wedded to a wife; if for wisdom, one should preach the Manthra Spenta (the moral code) unto him."\*

Since Zoroastrianism posits the existence of two creators, it breeds ditheism. But Lingayatism is out and out monotheistic. If Zoroastrianism rose against the polytheism and landed in ditheism and dualism, Lingayatism fought against the Vedic and Agamic polytheism and resulted in monotheism and monism. If the former championed the cause of the agricultural class, the latter fought for all the oppressed classes-Sudras (mostly farmers and manual workers), traders and artisans, against the opulent upper class of Brahmins. Kindness to animal creation was the basis of Lingayatism. Basava like Zoroaster, condemned sacrifice of any kind:

Dancig gaily they offer sheep  
To the sundry gods of wood and pond.  
Can the sheep save them from Shiva's wrath?  
No sheep or goat has ever done.  
Adore Kudalasangama with holy leaves.

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\*Vendidad, IV, 44.

Secondly Basava exploded the temple religion altogether since temple institutions obstruct the religious, social and economic development of humanity. But Zoroastrianism had to set up fire temples because the religion was biassed by duality. A defect in religion or philosophy leads to drawbacks in social structure. But Basava held that all temple institutions were an obstacle to the development of individuality; because the priestly class would play the role of brokers between deity and devotee—exploiting the devotees in the name of Almighty. Fire temples also need priests who would demand more gifts to the deity from the devotee:

Gods of metal, stone and wood are'nt gods  
They can be sold or thrown away, oh man,  
Our Kudalasagnama is the true God.

Like Zoroaster Basava denounced prostitution and polygamy and encouraged monogamy:

*Fools are they who court the prostitute,  
For, with her eyes she beckons one,  
In her mind she cherishes another,  
And talks of love to the third,  
Filled with poison in her heart.  
The chaste woman follows her one and only lord,  
The true devotee has one only God;  
Union with another is sin to the woman,  
While worship of false god is sin to thy devotee,  
My Lord Kudalasangama.*

## CHAPTER XXIII

### HINDU IMPERIALISM AND LINGAYATISM

*Monarchy, power and pomp!  
They are not permanent, friend!  
Remember Kalyana degenerated  
Went to rack and ruin!  
Brought to a miserable end  
The reign of a Chalukya king,  
Because of a Jangama, God Kudalasangama!*  
—Lord Basava

In the said Vachana Lord Basava explains the relation between politics and ethics. Politics without social ethics cannot prosper long. If monarchy does not respond to the call of the populace and if it does not look to the betterment of the social conditions, then its fate is sealed. So the basis of politics is a social and moral philosophy. If the philosophy is progressive then the political administration becomes democratic, otherwise the rule becomes autocratic. The progress and prosperity of an Empire or a nation may be judged not by the power and pomp of the palace but by the high standard of the masses living in it.

But what was the ideological background of the Vijayanagar Empire? The Empire was out and out a Kannada one. The brain behind the Empire was Madhavacharya; Madhava or Vidyaranya was a man of Karnatak.

Yet he wrote his voluminous writings like *Sarvadarshana-sangraha* in Sanskrit, the language of the pandits. Besides, his uterine brother, Sayanacharya, wrote a commentary ( *Bhashya* ) in Sanskrit on the Rigveda. Madhava was the founder of the Empire and Sayana was its minister. The hands behind the Empire were non-Brahmin brothers named Hukka and Bukka. But brain is more important than hands. The brain directs the hands. Consequently the Brahmin brain had a Brahmin philosophy which guided the destinies of the non-Brahmin masses. We should note that Madhava was a great grand disciple of Sankaracharya the advocate of Advaita-vada. So the philosophy of Madhava has a geneological kinship with that of Sankar. Sayanacharya was not an exception to this. Both reinstated Hinduism and made Vedic and Upanishad philosophy the official philosophy of the big Empire. From such philosophy the Hindu caste system follows as a corollary. Of course there might have ruled a few Veerashaiva kings. But the society in the empire was almost influenced by the caste system. Brahmin priestly class dominated the society. Hinduism served as the ideology of social slavery. It was an instrument for keeping the masses in spiritual darkness, so that they might be more amenable to the rule of the upper classes, so that they should obey authority willingly and unquestioningly; so that they might accept the inequities of life as ordained by divine justice, that they might remain resigned to the miseries of life as the result of their own sins in previous births and necessary for the purification of their souls; that

they should barter away intellectual freedom for the bliss of ignorance; that they might sleep happily in the lulling embrace of faith undisturbed by the curiosity to know.

It is said that Vijayanagar kings were famous temple builders. They spent much on art and architecture. True! But at whose cost did the art loving kings build magnificent temples and palaces? At whose expense did they undertake such things? The grandeur of the Vijayanagar Empire like that of the Roman Empire was based upon the poverty of the masses. Simplicity of life is a cardinal principle of Hinduism also. It was preached by the priesthood and practised by the masses. Magnificent temples and expensive religious ceremonies do not evidence piety. They are tokens of vain glory on the part of the ruling class and monuments to the misery of the masses. The squandering of national wealth on such unproductive purposes necessarily obstructs the economic development of the society. In stead of being in circulation and thereby reproducing itself, the great part of national wealth, representing the unpaid labour of the masses, is converted into heaps of granite and gold. Such a system means ever increasing exploitation of the masses, which takes the forms of slavery, forced labour and serfdom. Caste system is the peculiar form that slavery was given in India.

“The greatness of a nation in the past is erroneously measured by the magnificence of the royal court and the opulence of the ruling aristocracy. It is conveniently overlooked who paid for that greatness and



splendour and what was the condition of the multitude who tilled and toiled so that the rulers could put on the flattering garb of greatness, magnificence and renown.....

“ In the early and mediaeval ages, the productivity of labour was necessarily much lower than at present. Consequently, exceptional grandeur of royal cities, imposing magnificence of courts, flaunting extravagance of the nobility, vain stateliness of public and private architecture and the wasteful richness of temples and mausoleums, were not possible unless national income was very disproportionately distributed. As a matter of fact, these very monuments of national greatness testify to the endless oppression and grinding poverty of the masses. They represented a futile effort to conceal the decay of the established social order and the consequent destitution and degradation of the people. Historical research has revealed the fact that external splendour of the Roman Empire reached the apex just when the barbarous system of slavery was eating into the very foundations of the imperial structure .....

“ For the construction of the Great Wall of China, more than twentyfive percent of the entire social labour was withdrawn from productive activities. The result inevitably was a disastrous famine which reduced the population of the country by half. It was precisely in that period that Buddhist monasticism flourished in China and the impatience for the bliss

of Nirvana urged thousands of unhappy fanatics to the incredible practice of hurling themselves down from high mountains which, by virtue of those inhuman acts, acquired the reputation of possessing miraculous charms."\*

The Vijayanagara Empire was not an exception to the above description. Given the same ideology, the same effects will follow. Having Brahmanic philosophy as the basis of the social structure of the Vijayanagara Empire similar consequences will naturally follow from it.

"At least two Brahmanical empires attempted to attain ascendancy over all India—those of Vijayanagara and of the Marathas. The empire of Vijayanagara flourished between 1336 and 1565 and represented the grandest achievement of Brahmanism. The great Madhavacharya was probably its founder, his uterine brother Sayana-charya was its greatest minister. Vijayanagara had its days of barbaric splendour, wealth and luxury reminding us of the declining glory of Rome, when Rajas and nobles kept many hundreds of women in their harems and many more to attend on them, when palaces were literally paved with gold and jewels, when temples and their priests revelled in the immensity of their ill-gotten wealth, in the dazzling magnificence of their festivals and the fleeting charms of dancing girls, and gorgeous monuments of architecture rose out of the sweat of slaves and

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\*Heresis of the Twentieth Century: M. N. Roy,

prisoners of wars. Otherwise, the history of the 250 years of the ascendancy of Vijayanagara is a history of bloody wars without a moment of peace and security, of plots and counter plots, of indulgence in wine and women, of Sati, slavery and forced labour, of 400 and 500 women being burnt away along with the dead king, of women being buried alive along with their husbands, of human sacrifices such as that of sixty human victims offered to ensure the security of a dam near Hospet, of huge slaughter of animals for religious functions and other frightful excesses of priestcraft. During a nine day religious celebrations the king accompanied by his Brahmins went where the idols were and every day watched the slaughter of animals. 'Then he witnesses the slaughter of twentyfour buffaloes and a hundred and fifty sheep with which a sacrifice is made to the idol' (A Forgotten Empire by Sewell .266). The frequent wars and the distribution of booty among the Brahmins and temples remind us of those days of Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice) when the duty of the Kshatriya was to fight and amass wealth and share it with sacrificial priests. In the revived Hinduism we find all the unhealthy features of the religion of horse sacrifices with many more barrabous and debasing institutions which deserved but one fate-merciless extirpation. Such brutalities could be excused among the Muhammadan or Portuguese begots of those days. But in a land where the Buddha had preached and Asoka had ruled, there was no

excuse for the enlightened and sacerdotal priestly class when they reared so monstrous a system of sin and exploitation.”\*

Shivaji's Maratha Empire too was not an exception. The religious revival started by a band of inspired saints, teachers and literary men such as Tukaram, Ramadas, Ekanath and a host of others, resulted in the establishment of Shivaji's Maratha Empire. But Brahmanism was eating the core of the social structure of the empire. Priestly class compelled Sivaji to obey their behests. They went to the extent of persecuting the saints, Ekanath and Tukaram. The Brahmins troubled the saints because they dared to translate into Marathi, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat and the Bhagavadgita. ‘An outcaste saint, Chokhamela entered in the Pandharapur Temple for worship under some inspiration. The Brahmins took the matter to the Mussalman Officer who ordered the saint to be punished by being tied to and driven by a team of bullocks and by being tortured to death.’

“Shivaji Maharaj was never able to rise above the Brahmanical influence of his childhood and willingly surrendered himself and his kingdom to the yoke of the priests. The dedication or gift of the country to the Brahmins or the temple, the acceptance of the Kshatriyahood which meant sub-mission to the caste hierarchy, and the recognition of the right of the Brahmins to the Dewans and advisers have been

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\*The Menace of Hindu Imperialism: Swami Dharma Theertha D.A.L.L.B

wellknown stages of subjection to Brahmanism from the Pauranic days of Bali and Vamana down to the recent history of Travancore .....

“He was anxious to have his coronation celebrated in a fitting manner according to the Hindu Shastras. This was another opportunity for Brahmins to reduce Shivaji to the position of an obedient Kshatriya ruler always respectful to the Brahmins. Learned Brahmins were invited from all parts of the country and 11000 of them making a total of 50,000 with their wives and children, assembled at the capital and Shivaji feasted them with sweets for four months besides giving them costly presents of gold and money. The chief priest, Gaga Bhatta, alone is said to have received nearly a lakh of rupees. The whole ceremony involved an expenditure of not less than fifty lakhs of rupees, according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, while some others put it down at the incredible figure of seven crores. The Brahmins said that coronation according to the Shastras could be performed only of a Kshatriya ruler. A geneolgy was therefore invented by the priests and it was made out that Shivaji was Kshatriya, descended from the Rajaput rulers of Udaipur. He was then invested with the sacred thread for which he had to pay large sums to the priests. The latter then demanded another 8000 rupees for the forgiveness of the slaughter of Brahmins during Shivaji's expeditions. In spite of these lavish gifts, they refused

to initiate him into the Vedic mantra, and continued to speak of him as a Sudra, though he was a noble-born Maratha and no more or no less. 'Shivaji keenly felt his humiliation at the hands of Brahmins to whose defence and prosperity he had devoted his life. Their insistence on treating him as a Sudra drove him into the arms of Balaji Avji, the leader of the Kayasthas !' '\*

But Basava's Lingayat society contrasts itself very well from and becomes conspicuous on the social background of the Vijayanagar and Maratha empires. Lingayatism had a progressive philosophy in as much as it fought the Hindu caste system and laid the foundation of a cosmopolitan society. Its religion was not temple worship. It was both moral and socio-economic. It was interested in the uplift of the downtrodden masses from the clutches of the Brahmin priest-craft. The Lingayat concept of history is that history is not the story of kings and queens but that it is the life-story of the masses—the history of the poor people. To Basava history is a social science. The same is implied in the following Vachana of Siddharama:

Shastra is a weapon of Cupid;  
Vedanta is a mental disease.  
Mythology is the eulogy of the dead.  
Logic is a play of monkeys,  
Agama is an effort of Yoga,

\*The Menace of Hindu Imperialism: Swami Dharma Teertha.

History is a story of kings;  
 Smriti is a discrimination of sin and merit;  
 But the saying of a Sharana  
 Renders great help in realising,  
 Your Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna. \*

Lingayat Religion is critical and constructive. It rid religion of its crudities and distinguished itself from communalism and superstition. Hence it was a radical reformation movement. It did away with all social ills and evils and opened an era of peace and progress for a couple of centuries in Karnatak and other parts of India. 'By the time 12th century was ushered in, Jainism and Vaishnavism had gained ascendancy. Shaivism in the South had reached a crisis and time had come for it to rise or to fall. But down it was not to go; for by the time the century had half passed there shot into space a great hero who revolutionised the Shaivite faith in a short space of time. The attempt was heroic and the achievement was brilliant. Shaivism rose triumphant over the trammels of Varnashrama and the result was Veerashaivism. The hero appeared to be the Prime Minister of the then king of Karnatak. He was a kannada man and what wonder if Kannada became the language of the scriptures of the new heroic religion and Karnatak became the home of the new faith as it is even today! That was how the new faith came to be heroically founded and that is why it has come to be called Veerashaiva religion, meaning the heroic Shaiva faith. That

was how again Basava became the king of a great religion though the premier of a little province.' Basava observes:

*What is the use of dancing in temples ?  
What use is singing or praying ?  
Why read volumes after volumes ?  
Even peacocks dance, brass wires sing;  
No use to do anything without devotion.  
Devotion only can please our Kudalasangama.  
Adoring the Lord, their heads they bend  
To the million worthlenss gods.  
Mules are they—  
Born of an ass and horse.  
What sort of devotees are they ?  
Never can dual nature please  
our Lord Kudalasangama.*

—Lord Basava



## CHAPTER XXIV

### GANDHISM AND LINGAYATISM

*Regard ye Shastra as great ?  
It preaches karma.  
Think ye Veda superior ?  
It teaches animal slaughter.  
Hold ye Smriti supreme ?  
It is blind and cannot find.  
All these thou transcend'st,  
For social service is thy stamp,*  
*Kudalasangama.*  
*—Lord Basava*

This vachana of Basava sums up the essence of Lingayatism. Lingayatism was a new movement. It analysed and exposed the reactionary and authoritarian tendencies implicit in the Shastras, Vedas, Srutis and Smritis. But Gandhism is an outcome of the Vedas, Srutis and Smritis. Indeed it is a product of Vaidikism. It accepts the authority of the Vedas and Smritis and judges any social or economic problem in the light of such authority. Hence Gandhiji says:

“Early in my childhood I had felt the need of a scripture that would serve me as an unfailing guide through the trials and temptations of life. The Vedas could not supply that need, if only because to learn them would require fifteen to sixteen years of hard study at a place like Kashi, for which I was

not ready then. But the Gita, I had read somewhere, gave within the compass of its 700 verses the quintessence of all the Shastras and the Upanishads. That decided me .....Anyway I must disclaim any intention of straining the measuring of Hinduism or the Gita to suit any preconceived notions of mine. My notions were an outcome of a study of the Gita, Ramayan, Mahabharata, Upanishads, etc.”\*

It is no wonder that Gandhism venerates and glorifies the Brahmanic Puranas like the Ramayan and Mahabharata. It preaches a return to the good old golden days of the Ramayan. It idealises the Ramayan and invents a fictitious ideal of Rama Raj, which is to be the future Raj of Indians. Recently Gandhiji told people at a prayer meeting that if they prayed Ramana, heaven would descend to earth and they would get heavenly happiness. Gandhiji opines about the epics:

“The Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the two books that millions of Hindus know and regard as their guides, are undoubtedly allegories as the internal evidence shows—that they most probably deal with historical figures does not affect my proposition. Each epic describes the eternal duel that goes on between the forces of darkness and of light.”\*

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\* Gita The Mother: M. K. Gandhi.

Gandhiji's interpretation of these epics is allegorical and hence a super-imposition. But Basava gives a practical interpretation:

Talk not to me of those Puranas,  
 They all preach Karma !  
 Ancient Purana resorts to demon slaughter.  
 Vedic Purana exhorts animal sacrifice;  
 Demon-fight is the stamp of Ramayana;  
 Family-feud is the core of Mahabharata,  
 But peerless is thy Purana, Lord Kudalasngama.

The contention of Basava is that all the Puranas deliberately refrained from describing the social problems of the people—iniquity, untouchability, and woman slavery. What magnanimous moral can we derive from those legendary tales? They are a description of kings and queens, their private feuds and hitches. Another popular Kannada Lingayat poet named Sarwajna also follows suit:

He who listens attentively to the tale of family feuds (as in the Mahabharata) and to the story of kidnapping a woman (as in the Ramayan) should be condemned outright, says Sarwajna.

“ If today this ( Hindu ) philosophy of life, which effectively kills all incentive to progress, finds support in the gloomy and hopeless conditions of the life of the masses, it could not have arisen originally except on a similar social background. It

could not have persisted through so many centuries unless its social foundation remained unimpaired. 'Rama Raj' is an empty legend. Had the legend any foundation of historical truth, India would have had a different philosophy of life. Or, if the mythical 'Golden Age' ever was a reality, that must have been before India became a victim of her 'spiritualist' philosophy. Besides, Ramayan itself does not tell us how the masses of people lived under Rama Raj. It describes the splendour of the Ayodhya Puri; but omits to give any information about the source of the royal riches. These were evidently not produced by the princely parasites who spent all their time in practising archery; nor were the riches conjured up by the Brahmins. Even king Janaka could not have tilled more than a small patch of land with his golden plough. The riches were produced by others who lived under conditions hardly human. Otherwise, how could they be utterly absent from the picture of the society of the epoch? The historian obviously did not count them among human beings. Rama Raj, therefore, could not have been a Golden Age for the masses of the people..... No sensible man can possibly believe that non-violence is inherent in Hindu humanitarianism, so long as Rama, Krishna, Arjun, Bhim etc. remain the ideals of Hindu manhood. Those mythical heroes are glorified for their feats of conquest and acts of wholesale violence."\*

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\*Fragments of A Prisoner's Diary Vol. 1: M. N. Roy.

Even now a peasant in Karnataka expresses the same spirit about the Rama Raj; 'If Rama became a king, my toiling is not lessened in the least thereby.' His expression has become a country adage in Karnatak.

Further Gandhi's Varnadharma is reactionary as the four varnas are compartmental and hereditary:

"Varna means predetermination of the choice of a man's profession. The law of varna is that a man shall follow the profession of his ancestors for earning his livelihood. Every child naturally follows the 'colour' of his father or chooses his father's profession. Varna therefore is in a way the law of heredity. Varna is not a thing that is imposed on Hindus, but men who were trustees for their welfare discovered the law for them. It is not a human invention, but an immutable law of nature—the statement of a tendency that is ever present at work like Newton's law of gravitation. Just as the law of gravitation existed even before it was discovered, so did the law of Varna. It was given to the Hindus to discover that law."\*

Since my varna is predetermined by my forefathers, I must follow it. It is my Karma also. This is nothing but a restatement of the Vedic chaturvarna-dharma. The merit of a man is not recognised in the allotment of professions, because the profession is hereditary. Hence the future career of a man is predetermined by the

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\*Gita The Mother: M. K. Gandhi

providence of heredity and initiative and enterprise are curbed. A ryot is to remain a ryot till his death, and more surprising is that his sons and daughters also should follow the same family vocation though they may possess leanings towards other professions. Gandhiji continues—"But the only profession after his heart should be the profession of his fathers. There is nothing wrong in choosing that profession, on the contrary, it is noble. The Gita does talk of varna being according to Guna and Karma, but Guna and Karma are inherited by birth. Lord Krishna says all varnas have been created by me—*Chatur Varnyam Maya Sristum*; i. e. I suppose by birth: the law of varna is nothing, if not by birth."

If Guna and Karma are hereditary, then one's profession must be hereditary. But this is the justification of the old Vedic varnashram-dharma, because in practice all four classes will be separatist and 'ful many a flower will be born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air of Varnashrama.'

In reply to Gandhiji's theory of hereditary caste, Mr. S. D. Nadakarni in his manual of *Ram Rajya* writes:

"It may be objected that such instances as the above of 'women, Vaishyas and Sudras' figuring as generals or warriors are extremely rare—that in fact they are such exceptions as only go to prove the rule, as they say. True, but why prevent or discourage by means of rigid sacrosanct laws such exceptions, whenever and wherever they crop up, from fructi-

lying and giving of their best to the society to which they belong? True; not all 'women, Vaishyas and Sudras' may prove efficient soldiers, but if any of them happen to be martially minded, why deny them the opportunity of serving the nation as soldiers on the ground that it is not their hereditary business? The fact is that Heredity is not all. Both history and biology prove that Environment (which includes training) does play a by-no-means negligible part in determining individual bents and aptitudes.

"If heredity were all, we should not find farmers begetting soldiers, nor soldiers begetting scientists, not scientists begetting novelists and non-entities. But numberless are the instances we have of such, down the ages of recorded history. And many of those instances have arisen not only in apparent violation of heredity, but in spite of training attempted in the hereditary line."

Ramanand Babu also thoroughly 'exposes the reactionary cult of hereditary caste in the following:

"Hereditary caste is a thoroughly unreasonable institution. Division into occupational groups may and do exist, as they do everywhere; but there is no reason why they should be made hereditary and the groups placed in watertight compartments .....

"It has done great spiritual harm to men. Some castes have been puffed up with a sense of their

importance. They have become spiritually proud and imagined that they were born pure and holy and others were impure and even untouchable .. ....

“Those who under the influence of caste considered themselves to belong to an inferior class of men, have become unduly depressed. Their spirits and minds have not had full scope to develop. Thus the human race has been deprived of the intellectual, moral and spiritual wealth which they could otherwise have contributed to the common treasure-house of humanity.

“The position of the Untouchables has become worse still, if possible. They have been treated as worse than the lower animals.

“Thus where modern India boasts of only about a dozen men of international reputation, it could have boasted of scores of such, if caste had not prevented untold millions for ages from reaching the full stature of humanity.

“It has already been mentioned that India's loss of freedom has been due in great part to caste. The lower orders have not cared much who, whether high caste Indians or conquering foreigners, became the top-dogs, because they felt that they were destined to remain the underdogs. In fact, as we see at present, it is easy to get the non-Brahman and depressed classes to declare that they would prefer



foreign domination to the domination of the high caste Hindus.

“Caste has been perhaps the greatest obstacle to social, economical and political progress in India. It has stood in the way of the solidarity of the Hindu people and prevented the growth of a compact nation. For where there is no mutual love and trust, there cannot be that cement which binds the parts together.”\*

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Scheduled castes, thrashes threadbare the Indian caste system:

“It is a pity that caste even today has its defenders. The defences are many. It is defended on the ground that the caste system is but another name for division of labour and if division of labour is a necessary feature of every civilized society, then it is argued that there is nothing wrong in the caste system. Now the first thing to be urged against this view is that caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers. Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste system is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from division of labour—it is an heirarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the

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\*Rama-Rajya: S. D. Nadakarni

other. In no other country is the division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers. There is also a third point of criticism against this view of the caste system. This division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes. Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and to make his own career. This principle is violated in the caste system so far as it involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance, selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on that of the social status of the parents. Looked at from another point of view, this stratification of occupations which is the result of the caste system is positively pernicious. Industry is never static. It undergoes rapid and abrupt changes. With such changes an individual must be free to change his occupation. Without such freedom to adjust himself to changing circumstances, it would be impossible for him to gain his livelihood .....The division of labour brought about by the caste system is not a division based on choice. Individual sentiment, individual preference, has no place in it. It is based on the dogma of predestination. As an economic organization caste is therefore, a harmful institution, in as much as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules. ”\*

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\*Annihilation of caste; with a reply to Mahatma Gandhi-

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

If Gandhiji advocates the hereditary profession, Basava pleads for free choice of profession. He pulled down the anti-social structure of Varnashrama and formed a catholic society of Lingayats. Guna and Karma are certainly not hereditary. They are acquired:

A man becomes a blacksmith by heating iron; he becomes a washerman by washing clothes; he becomes a goldsmith by tinkling gold; he becomes a Brahmin by reading the Vedas. Are there people who are born of a ear in this world? Therefore, Lord Kudala-sangama, he is a Kulaja who knows the Linga.

Gandhism advocates idol-worship and temple religion. Indirectly it supports priest-craft. Gandhiji himself writes:

"I do not disbelieve in idol-worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol-worship is part of human nature. .... I do not consider idol-worship a sin. ....

"I am both an idolator and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms. I value the spirit behind the idol-worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Musalmans

presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples.\*

But Lingayatism denounces the idol-worship. Temple religion becomes a vested interest. The populace will be contaminated by the priest-craft. So idol-worship encourages priest-craft. The priests will exploit the devotees in all possible ways. Basava questions: Why create this priest-class between people and God? This brokerage system of Brahmanism must go root and branch, lock and barrel. Our body itself is a temple in which we can find our God. Temple religion encourages exploitation. Lakhs of temples there are in India! They have property and funds and priests are their owners. They have become vested interests. Gandhiji fights for these temples i. e. his philosophy supports priest-craft. Take Harijan uplift. Gandhiji insists that temples should be opened to the Harijans. Consequently the temple priests will get gifts from Harijans! The poor Harijans will become poorer. Instead of removing the temple institution Gandhiji retains it. Thereby he will be defending the present social order. But Basava was not satisfied with the status quo. Hence he revolted against the temple religion. In those days the priestly class was a moneyed class. The masses had become untouchables because they were poor. They were impoverished by the priest craft. Basava removed this old socio-economic untouchability by stripping the Brahmin priest class of its right of exploiting the masses, because untouchability was the result of poverty. Hence Gandhiji's movement

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\*The Unseen Power: M. K. Gandhi

is conservative, whereas Basava's agitation was progressive. So a Sharana distinguishes the Lingayat thought from the Gandhian path:

He that resorts to Four Vedas is an inheritor  
of Brahma,  
He that adheres to Eighteen Puranas is an  
apostle of Vishnu,  
He that hankers after Twenty-eight Agamas  
is an adherent of Rudra.  
He that is absorbed in Thirty-two Upani-  
shads is an advocate of Ishvara.  
He that is engrossed in the Six Shastras is a  
disciple of Sadashiva.  
But an effort after the Knowledge of Linga  
is magnanimous, O Jagama Linga-prabhu.

Finally, truth and non-violence are twin pillars of Gandhism. Gandhism explains them metaphysically or teleologically. Lingayatism holds them to be valid in a dialectic sense. In the Gandhian sense truth and non-violence do not apply to the class relations in the society. Consequently the close observance of truth and non-violence will protect the iniquitous class-ridden hence violent society. Gandhism leads to the defence of violent class-ridden society of today by means of truth and non-violence. Gandhiji writes:

"The world is full of himsa and Nature does appear to be red in tooth and claw. But if we bear in mind that man is higher than the brute, then is

man superior to that Nature. If man has a divine mission to fulfil, a mission that becomes him, it is that of Ahimsa. Standing as he does in the midst of himsa, he can retire into the inner-most depths of his heart and declare to the world around him that his mission in this world of himsa is Ahimsa, and only to the extent that he practises it does he adorn his kind.”\*

Gandhiji is very frank. The practical implications of his conservative philosophy is best brought out in his article entitled ‘Is Violence creeping in?’ in the *Harijan*:

“To prevent workers from going to their work by standing in front of them, is pure violence and must be given up. The owners of the mill or other factories would be fully justified in invoking the assistance of the police and a Congress Government would be bound to provide it, if the Congressmen concerned would not desist ..... But the Congress, so long as it retains non-violence as its basic policy, cannot resort to usurpation, much less allow any class of persons to be insulted or humiliated in any way whatsoever, or allow any Congressman or a body of Congressmen to take the law in their own hands.”

Gandhism does not touch the fringe of the present social structure. Its ideals of truth and non-violence are not applicable to the violent social structure. Gandhiji does not talk of the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Instead of facing the present day class-ridden world Gandhism shirks the problem by sidetracking it through

metaphysical gymnastics. But Lingayatism did recognise the class conflict in the society. Vedic religion and society were full of violence in the sense of class exploitation. Hence the mission of Basava was to create an atmosphere of non-violence by throwing over board the Vedic class-ridden society of his time. So truth and non-violence could be established only after the removal of violent and dishonest exploitation of the masses by the Brahmin upper class. Hence Basava was a realist—he could create a new order through revolution; whereas Gandhiji is an idealist—an abstract spiritual monist; he cannot create a new era. That is the difference between Basava and Gandhiji.

If Gandhism reaffirms the hereditary caste, Lingayatism combats it tooth and nail. If the caste is a block to progress and freedom in the twentieth century, it was more so in the twelfth century. Basava had to fight Brahmin orthodoxy to free the masses from the clutches of Vedic varnashramadharma. If Gandhiji advocates the hereditary caste, Basava champions freedom of profession. A profession is not hereditary but acquired. A man in his lifetime is free to choose a vocation suited to his inclination. Heredity kills the aims and aspirations of a man. Free choice leads to the progress of society. Hence Basava overhauled the social fabric and built it anew on the sound foundation of democracy. If Gandhism is akin to Brahmanism, Lingayatism is related to social democracy. By pinning its faith to Vaidikism and its socio-religious doctrine of varnashrama, Gandhism becomes reactionary in outlook and regressive in practice.

Whereas Lingayatism becomes progressive socially and culturally by renouncing the reactionary cult of Vaidikism. Lingayats are absolutely in the wrong if they believe that the progress of the community would be facilitated through Gandhism. In the twentieth century Lingayatism finds its own in socialism and democracy, but Gandhism in Vaidikism and dictatorship.

That is the difference between the backward look of Gandhism and the forward march of Lingayatism. Gandhism is revivalism, but Lingayatism leads to Renaissance. The former by idealising the mythical past, becomes regressive and retrogressive, the latter became progressive by combatting the chaturvarna of the past:

*Veda is a bore of Brahmins;  
 Shastra is a bustle of the Bazar,  
 Purana is a tale of plunderers,  
 Agama is an account of falsehood;  
 Logic and grammar are verbose;  
 Such is the literature of those  
 That are without Linga on their bodies.  
 One cannot attain to greatness  
 Who hath no self experience  
 Says our Lord Kalideva.  
 Useless became Veda being unable to know;  
 Vain was Shastra being unable to achieve;  
 Fruitless was Purana being unable to fulfil;  
 Wretched became elders unable to know themselves:  
 They reaped what they had sown.  
 How can they know thee, Lord Guheshvara.*

—Allama Prabhu



## CHAPTER XXV

### **THE FUTURE OF LINGAYATISM**

The task of philosophy is to find the explanation of nature, including the vital and spiritual phenomena ( life, mind, will, emotion, soul etc.), in nature itself, without reference to any super-natural category the existence of which cannot be proved, which is beyond experience, unknown and unknowable.

—M. N. Roy

The world has progressed tremendously since the days of Basava. The rapid progress of science has revolutionised our lives. As a result, new problems have arisen. The recent world war shook the foundation of humanity. It was a conflict of ideas and ideals. The progressive forces have vanquished the reactionary might of Fascism. It was a tussle between democracy and dictatorship. The banner of socialist democracy is hoisted on the world front. The economic foundation of British imperialism is shattered, with the result that Britain has become a debtor nation to India. That is the death-bell of imperialism.

In philosophy also, there has arisen a new scientific trend. Just as the inventions of science have affected practical problems, so philosophy, once the handmaid of religion, has become dependent on science. The advance of physics and biology has influenced philosophy and

ethics. The belief in divinity is slowly losing ground yielding place to humanity. Darwin's theory of evolution revolutionised science and philosophy so that human society itself has undergone a change. The aristocratic upper classes received a shock from Darwin's discovery. Further the epoch-making discoveries of Galileo, Copernicus and Kepler shattered the foundation of the time-honoured religious philosophy and the metaphysical outlook on the universe and life. It was found that the observation of natural phenomena without any preconceived notion led to conclusions which upset the celestial and terrestrial order sanctioned by religion and theology. A philosophical revolution took place. A radical change in the outlook on the problems of the universe, life, history and society became inevitable. That change was a condition for the great political revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which ushered in the marvellous era of modern civilization.

The development of biology quickened the philosophical revolution. The mysterious entity of life was discovered to be nothing but a property of organic matter. Ideas are proved to be products of mind, which in its turn is a function of a material organ, the brain. In consequence of all these revolutionary discoveries regarding the mysterious vital phenomena as well as the so-called spiritual essence of man, the old conception of soul—the immortal divine spark in man—appeared to be only imagination. Consequently each great discovery of

science dealt a staggering blow to the hoary castle of religion, built in the air of faith, and consequently added stone after stone to the solid foundation of the philosophy of dialectical materialism. Hence the optimistic utterances of scientists:

“Give me matter and motion and I will construct the world,” said Descartes. Eddington now improves upon him and says: “Give me a world—a world in which there are relations—and I will construct matter and motion.”

In the nineteenth century the lowered banner of philosophical revolution was raised again, this time by the ideologists of the toiling masses. The new leaders of the revolution were equipped with a formidable weapon forged by the latest and the greatest idealist philosopher, Hegel. It was the dialectic method of thought which ousted formal logic. Exposing the transitoriness of everything and revealing the constant conception of a new in the womb of the passing old, dialectics put an end to all authority. No other weapon could be more welcome to the leaders of the philosophical revolution. Out of the magnificent ruins of Hegelian Absolute Idealism, Feuerbach rescued the positive contribution of the classical philosophy as the basis of the ‘Philosophy of the Future’—scientific materialism. Armed with an encyclopaedic knowledge of all the sciences, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels clearly and comprehensively stated the new outlook on life, opened by the discoveries of science during the preceding three hundred years. In the bright

light of that materialist outlook, all the problems of nature, life, history and society, appear devoid of all mystery and man attains full height of his glory as the sole master of his fate.

Sir C. V. Raman, one of the greatest scientists of our day, advocates a philosophical revolution as the condition for the much delayed but inevitable Renaissance of India. He adopts the scientific attitude to life:

“We live in an age of science. Most people think that science has served humanity by producing electric light, motor cars, aeroplanes, etc. That is only a partial view. In fact few realise the outlook that science has produced during the last two hundred years. Science has given us a new view of the Universe.....

“The future of India depends on a courageous application of scientific knowledge. As man learns to apply the scientific method to the problems of everyday life, in that measure he will rise to and reach his allotted height. Let the dogs of conservatism, ignorance and fanaticism bark, but the glorious caravan of the Indian Nation will move on with irresistible force.”\*

The adoption of a scientific outlook, the application of the scientific method to the problems of life, will necessarily mean the rejection of ideas, ideals, institutions and traditions which are erroneously cherished as the peculiar features of Indian culture and to preserve and glorify

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which has consequently become an article of faith of Indian Nationalism. The posture of standing with the face turned backward is obviously incompatible with any striving for progress. The method and point of departure must be changed before any advance is possible.

What is the future of Lingayatism in the context of the present day world? No doubt, philosophically Lingayatism was more scientific than spiritual. It fought the old Vedic order by raising a religio-philosophical revolution. It could achieve great results by emphasising the importance of Shakti, the dynamic aspect of nature. Hence it could torpedo the Vedic basis of society. The more scientific a philosophy is, the more progressive and revolutionary will be the socio-economics of the country. Basava lived in the days of mediaevalism when religion was a dominating factor. He subverted the mediaeval religion, art and society and ushered in the era that leads to modernity. He was a heretic who fought Vedic orthodoxy. He brought about a revolutionary movement in the midst of mediaevalism.

But we are living in the twentieth century, the age of science. The revolution of the twentieth century should be scientific. Without the scientific background, the philosophic and socio-economic revolution cannot come into being. With scientific philosophy as the basis, the revolution was brought about in Russia by Lenin and Stalin. But in India, we should start the renaissance movement, i. e. a revolution in philosophy. The reality of life and the universe should be the first tenet of our

philosophy. Secondly the abiding character of the universe is change which should be the very dynamic of action. It should be an unceasing urge to enlightened revolutionary conduct.

There is a tendency among Lingayats to compare Lingayatism with Gandhism. In my opinion, Basava is revolutionary but Gandhiji is reactionary. Gandhism has not a scientific basis. It tends to the Vedic philosophy and culture. In it Maya appears in a different garb. The English have been constantly telling us that if Indians can put their house in order, they will have no place here. Gandhiji tells us practically the same thing namely: learn to live happily in your misery, imagine your poverty to be spiritual richness, and political slavery and economic exploitation will vanish—all is Maya, all is illusion.

Gandhism is opposed to science. It bids us go back to Nature and to the old days when our ancient Rishis lived happily. It does not analyse properly the present machine age. Without doing this, it prescribes the remedy—abolition of the machine. But the machine is not responsible for the exploitation of the masses. It is the upper class of capitalists who own and use the machine for exploitation. The upper classes enjoy the benefit of scientific inventions. A mason who builds a bungalow lives in a hut. Innumerable coolies who work daily in modern factories live in primitive surroundings; many are houseless and sleep at night on the roadside. A machine

is being used as an instrument of exploitation by the monied magnates. Therefore it is man who is responsible for the poverty of the dumb millions, and not the lifeless machine. The conclusion is that we should not deride the discoveries of science without looking to our own defects in using them. Science is born to serve humanity. If it is exploited for the benefit of the masses, yielding the greatest good to the greatest number, then the present-day poverty will be reduced to the minimum, and a new culture and civilization will come upon the scene. But Gandhism fights shy of the machine and advises us to go back to nature. Therefore Gandhism is revivalism and not a renaissance. For Gandhiji writes:

“..... Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery there are large cities, and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways; and there only does one see electric light. English villages do not boast of any of these things. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that when in a European town there was a scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down and people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. Books can be written to demonstrate its evils.\*

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\* Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule: M. K. Gandhi

Finally Mr. Philip Spratt, a leading journalist of Bangalore, sums up the analysis of Gandhism:

"Thus on all these matters, which are integral to Gandhism we differ from it. We do not share its puritanical morality; we do not strive to deny the world the benefits of technology or of knowledge; we are not tied to capitalist or precapitalist social forms as Gandhism in its alternative versions appears to be. Gandhism is restrictive all round; it wants to shut mankind in, to enclose it within national frontiers, to deprive it of all that makes life worthliving, of knowledge, of art, of sport, of enjoyment of any kind. We want to open the frontiers—that is why we are opposed to nationalism—to open the windows to let all the winds of the world blow over the land, the art, the literature, the science, the technology of the world, to let people know them and enjoy them and profit from them."\*

Basava, like Gandhiji, did not advocate the cult of revivalism. He did not revive the Vedic philosophy, religion and society. That is, he did not go back to the hoary past to seek solace. He did not support the asceticism of the Veda and its caste system, the polytheism of the Agamas and the other-worldliness of the Brahmanic religion. On the other hand, he cast away those reactionary cults and founded a new order of philosophy, religion and society.

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\* Independent India, Vol. X No. 9.



Gandhism advocates the theory of trusteeship. According to it a landlord is a trustee of a peasant, a mill-master is a trustee of millworkers and a Raja is a well-wisher of his subjects. But what class of people is exploiting the masses? Capitalists and landlords are the exploiters of the masses. Capitalism and feudalism are a stumbling block to the progress and prosperity of millions of the Indian masses. On the other hand, Gandhism assigns the trusteeship of the poor masses to the rich upper classes; that is, the rights of the people are entrusted to the upper classes in the society. Hence Gandhism does not advance the interests of toiling masses.

But with Basava, it is quite the contrary. He found in the Brahmanic priestly class the sole agency of exploitation, because in the society of that day the priestly class was a monied class. It had the monopoly of ruling the masses economically as well as socially and intellectually. Basava was up against this class of exploiters and raised a revolt. He pulled down the Vedic fabric of religion and society and fought against the caste system of those days. But if Gandhism insists upon being revolutionary, it should renounce its ideological basis of capitalism and feudalism which are responsible for exploiting the masses economically, socially and culturally. But Gandhism is not a revolt against the present order. Hence Gandhiji is not revolutionary but reactionary; whereas Basava was revolutionary and progressive.

If Basava were to live at present, he would fight the upper class domination and free the people from exploit-

ation. He would not discard the machine and its advantages but would free the machine from the ownership of rich men and make it the common property of the collective ownership of the masses. Then there would be no classes not to speak of castes—one cutting the throat of the other. He would not have gone to the twelfth century to revive the charkha which was the only existing machine in those days. He would have advanced and made the masses the master of the machine. In short he would play the role of a Marx or a Roy.

Swami Dharma Teerthaji Maharaj warns against the manace of Hindu imperialism hidden in the Congress organization:

“Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal are taking too much for granted if they believe that the country will be non-violent, will liberate the Harijans, recognise the equality of man by birth, stop the cut-throat economic exploitation, and establish comradeship with other religions and nations in the interest of humanity when it gets Swaraj. Little has been done to educate the people to these ends .....

“An urgent need of the day is to get rid of the notion that we are a unique people, a peculiar type of humanity distinct from the rest of mankind ..... People who think their so-called culture to be unique will, when they get power, use all means to preserve and propagate the injustices and atrocities which masquerade in the name of that culture. Give the Hindus independence and the

necessary power, they will be as violent, as imperialistic and as aggressive as other people and in addition will do their utmost to propagate their caste-culture and priestcraft as the unique Hindu civilization. All the arguments of the Bhagavad-Gita and other sacred books will be used to justify bloody wars and the suppression of the human rights. An independent and powerful Hindu India claiming to its caste, culture, will be a menace to civilization and world peace. The sooner we realise the truth that we are like other peoples of the world in all essential respects, the better it will be for us and the world.”\*

The Bible of Gandhism is the Bhagavad-Gita. The Gandhian philosophy has its roots in the Gita. But in as much as the Gita advocates the Hindu caste-system ordained by divinity according to quality and merit, Gandhism reinstates the same in a new garb. As Mr. M. N. Roy clarifies it:

\* Nietzsche's philosophy ( of Fascism ) justifying crass class domination, bears a striking resemblance with the Hindu doctrine of Karma and, indeed, is an echo of the voice of God himself: ‘ The four castes are created by me according to quality and merit.’ ( Gita ). The caste-system places different groups of people in different social stations. If that system is providentially ordained, those belonging to lower stations must be reconciled forever to their positions. Social inequality is then perpetuated on the authority of divine will. The slave must be a

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\* Menace of Hindu Imperialism: Swami Dharma Teertha

slave for ever ! The ruling class enjoys its power and privilege as gifts of God which only the sinful class ever dare to take away from it. In the Gita, God also announced that all earthly powers are manifestations of his power. Not only are the priestly privileges of the Brahmin exercised on divine authority; not only did kings and emperors in the past rule as incarnations of God; but even today the parasitic landlords claim to be 'the natural leaders' of the peasant masses whom they exploit .....

"According to Gandhism, capitalists as well as workers are children of God; and the poor should not envy their rich brothers. Gandhism glorifies sacrifice and suffering as great virtues. It preaches these glorious virtues to the impoverished masses .....In fact our blessed 'spiritual' philosophy has never done anything but to serve the interests of the upper classes ..... Even today the divine doctrine of 'truth and non-violence' is serving the purpose of arresting the forces of social discontent and political revolt. The taste of a little power, granted by the grace of Imperialism, is driving our spiritually minded nationalists towards fascist practices."

\* Fascism: its Philosophy, Professors and Practice: M. N. Roy.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### **THE RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT**

**“Unless Socialism is international to the extent of producing a world government, which controls all military power, it might more easily lead to war than does capitalism, because it represents a still greater concentration of power.”**

**—Einstein**

**“We say that in the ideal State visualised by us as a practical possibility, detached individuals—philosophers—will be at the helm of public affairs. Spiritually free men, detached individuals, philosophers, cannot be corrupted by power.”**

**—M. N. Roy**

The world has rapidly advanced since the time of the Lingayat movement. Old values have changed and new ones have sprung up. Science has progressed to such an extent that it has not only affected but penetrated the various branches of knowledge. Philosophy, once the handmaid of religion, has become the servant of science. Science has overwhelmed philosophy. Religion, at one time an agency of progress, has now ceased to be a lever of progress. It had played out its role. Politics in the advanced countries is based on scientific philosophy and socio-economics. Religion has lost its social force. The class relations in

the society have undergone a change. Religion has led to communalism, and even nationalism has resulted in communal deadlocks in Indian politics. For nationalism is also a form of communalism. It is racial communalism. It is limited to a particular area of the world. Both have served as cloaks for upper class organisations. Free thinking is hindered; difference of opinion, merit and ability, and democratic procedure are checked effectively in such politics. Communal and nationalist philosophy should be replaced by a democratic and social philosophy. A broad philosophic view should be entertained. Swami Dharma Theertha appeals to the Youth of the country:

“ Friends, if culture means Hindu-Muslim hatred, say boldly that you will not have it; if culture means preservation of castes and priests and untouchability, say you hate it; if culture means keeping our mothers and sisters in humiliation, say you disown it and are ashamed of it. If culture stands for antagonism to scientific progress and hatred of things foreign because they are foreign, say you will have nothing of it; if culture means that you may not think freely in the light of your own reason, nor hold up ideals of a new world, different from the past, say that you prefer uncultured freedom to cultured stagnation; if culture means cow-worship, purdah, priestcraft, scripture-worship and other similar stupidities, say you are disgusted with it. Such an open disavowal and rejection of false cultures will in itself be a mark of the finest culture. Stand out uncompromi-

singly for freedom of the mind, for the freedom to know, examine, criticise, and accept or reject in the light your own best self ..... Refuse to take anything on the authority of scriptures, religions, Mahatmas. Cultivate your own mind and trust in your own inner light.”\*

To have social and cultural freedom our political movement should be based on scientific philosophy. The metaphysical and religious basis of present-day Indian politics should be replaced by a philosophical and scientific background. The spiritual and metaphysical outlook should go yielding place to a secular and materialist view of life. This is the only way to combat communal and national politics, thus clearing the way to democratic freedom. Mr. M. N. Roy, with that aim, invokes a philosophical revolution in India:

“Human life must be guided by a philosophy. That philosophy may change from time to time. But there are certain values, certain principles, which transcend time and space. Otherwise, we shall have to lose faith in the progress of humanity. How can we judge that civilization is a progress from barbarism? There must be something common to barbarism and civilisation. We can judge that this or that thing distinguishes civilisation as a greater human endeavour and therefore civilization is a progress from barbarism. Otherwise, there is no standard for measuring progress and no ground to believe that civilization is better than barbarism.

“Therefore a philosophy, to be a guide for all forms of human action, must have some ethics, some morals,

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\* Enemies of Indian freedom: Swami Dharma Teertha

which must recognise certain things as permanent and abiding in humanity. And only a group of human beings—be it a political party or any other kind of organisation—primarily moved by those abiding (and I should say permanent, as humanity itself) values, can claim to be the maker of the future .....

“ We not only want to create a new world; we want to know what kind of a world we are going to create. We must know what is freedom before we can be qualified as the architects of a free world. What the world needs is a philosophy of freedom. The birth of the Radical Democratic Party was heralded by the declaration that India needs a philosophical revolution. Without a philosophical revolution no social revolution is possible. We shall have to remember that. We cannot make a philosophical revolution by learning fallacious theories, sticking to exploded dogmas and running after false ideals.”\*

But the core of nationalism is communalism. Nationalism expresses itself in terms of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Harijans etc. It is a conglomeration of conflicting communities. Consequently it results in conflict. The present Hindu-Muslim strife is an evidence of the same. Nationalism is not cohesive but is conflictive. Hence the Hindu-Muslim tension. In the womb of nationalism conflicts between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, *Sanatanis* and Harijans are still smouldering. In future they shall inflame if nationalism is not replaced by humanism. In course of a letter addressed to the *Sunday observer*, Madras,

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\* New Orientation: M, N. Roy,



Dr. C. R. Reddi, Vice Chancellor, Andhra University, comments on the present Indian situation:

"I am heartbroken over the tragic condition of the country. Our people have failed. It is now clear that we tried to build with a timber, worm-eaten to the core, and the intended structure has broken down miserably. Our intentions have been good, our calculations and our realism faulty. I don't think there is much that you can do, or any one of us could do, to retrieve the situation.

"..... Our boast that India will lead the world in spirituality and morality has proved to be a vain and idiotic pretention. Today India is like the dreaded head of Gorgon Medusa, at the terrible sight of which, Humanity turns into stone with horror."

What then is the alternative for religious nationalism? It is humanism which is modern in outlook and outcome. It is untainted by the communalism of nationalism and the fanaticism of communism. There are only two alternatives before us: Communalism and Humanism. It is between religious philosophy and scientific philosophy. "Realism becomes the philosophical foundation of science when the reality of the physical world is conceived as independent of any other existence. Man can dare conceive the idea of conquering nature when the latter is no longer regarded as a divine creation, not to be tampered with by any impertinent mortal. So long as the physical world is regarded as real, because it is the creation of the Supreme Reality (God), man cannot ever think of the possibility of remaking it. Yet man

becomes civilised only when he acquires the power of remaking the world. Religious realism permits man to regard the world as real, and submit himself to the vicissitudes and tyrannies of that reality. It does not inspire him with the courage to free himself from the bondages of his environments, social as well as physical. It does not help him to assert his creativeness so as to transform ugly realities into beautiful ones and replace harmful realities by useful ones. In order to feel that he is free to act if only he has the knowledge which gives the power to do so, he must start with the conviction that he is a part of a reality which exists independently by itself. That is the realism which makes science possible and thus inspires man in his advance towards civilisation.”\*

Mr. M. N. Roy blazes the message of the Renaissance Movement in India:

“Humanity has progressed a good deal since the time India was the home of an ancient civilisation. Contemporary India shares the ideals of modern mankind; but modern ideals cannot be attained by those who still remain wedded to old ideas. We must draw inspiration from the past, but traditional ideas must be subjected to criticism, and their positive essence brought up to the standards of modern knowledge. Old values must be reevaluated. That is Renaissance.

“The past of our country, our cultural heritage, is buried deep under rubbish accumulated during the dark ages. What is called the history of India and the history

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\*From *Savagery to Civilisation*: M. N. Roy

of Indian philosophy, cannot be simply taken for granted. As a matter of fact, there is no history of India, nor history of Indian philosophy. They talk about big things; that is easy. Because there is no properly recorded history; legends and fairy tales pass as history. Recently, there is so much talk about Vikram era, for example. These legends and fairy tales cannot stand the test of criticism. There are now generally accepted standards for judging the authenticity of what has until now passed as history. But critical method is unknown. We are a nation of believers. We believe in our past greatness, and with that belief it is simple to spin out legends and fairy tales.

“Similarly, they talk about Indian philosophy. There are all sorts of Mantras and Sutras and Shastras; but how many people try to subject them to the test of modern knowledge? They are simply taken as dogmas, final truths, revealed wisdom, to be taken for granted. That was not the spirit of Indian philosophy, and the greatness of India was the greatness of Indian philosophy. We decry western civilisation and proclaim that Indian philosophy has a message for the world. But these evangelists of an Indian spiritual message do not know to what extent ancient Indian philosophy influenced what is today called western philosophy and civilisation. I am not one of them who maintain that all achievements of modern civilisation and technology could be found in the Vedas. But I want to point out the fact that the rationalist thought developed in ancient India, before she was overwhelmed by the counter revolution which destroyed

Buddhism, went to the Greeks; the Arabs inherited the legacy and passed it on to the founders of modern European civilisation. Ultimately, it largely influenced the history of Europe through the Renaissance. Hearing those echoes, European humanity woke up four hundred years ago, while we are still sleeping. That is the reason for the tragedy of our country.

“The world indeed is crying out for a new spiritual leadership. There is no reason why India should not contribute to the satisfaction of the requirements of modern humanity caught in a profound social and cultural crisis. Will she rise up to the occasion? That is a challenge of history.

“The Renaissance movement will lay the intellectual and moral foundation on which an abiding structure of democratic freedom can be raised. It will do the work of historical and archaeological discovery of the real achievements of ancient India’s creative genius, and hand over these values to the growing generations, who will then come before the people with a new hope for the future.”\*

What then are the values of Lingaytism to be revaluated? Philosophically the dynamics of Shakti i. e. the doctrine of change should be revaluated to the scientific philosophy. The creativeness of humanity within the orbit of divinity should be reorientated to the scientific humanism. In the scientific humanism humanity assumes the creative role of divinity—man makes the world and

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\*Independent India, Vol, XI No. 29

shapes it to his progress and prosperity. Since pantheism is inverted materialism, the Lingayat pantheism converts itself into scientific realism. The socio-economic trends of Lingayatism can be reconstructed to the scientific democracy and socialism. In fact they lead logically to the same conclusion; finally the moral aspect can be reinterpreted to the new humanism. Consequently Lingayatism is changed into Humanism. In short, we should reevaluate the positive trends of all religions; the result will be Humanism, free from the trammels of communalism, nationalism, racialism and even communism. Humanism is not eclecticism but dynamism. Hence it is scientific. It is a philosophy of life. We should therefore dig deep into the ruins of Indian history to find the real gems, the human values of Indian culture, which transcend space and time. As the poet Gray in his famous *Elegy* puts it:

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

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